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THE WORKS OF EDGAR ALLAN POE

VOLUME V

MISCELLANEOUS

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THE PHILOSOPHY OF COMPOSITION

CHARLES DICKENS, in a note now lying before me, alluding to an examination I once made of the mechanism of "Barnaby Rudge," says—"By the way, are you aware that Godwin wrote his 'Caleb Williams' backwards? He first involved his hero in a web of difficulties, forming the second volume, and then, for the first, cast about him for some mode of accounting for what had been done."

I cannot think this the *precise* mode of procedure on the part of Godwin—and indeed what he himself acknowledges, is not altogether in accordance with Mr. Dickens' idea—but the author of "Caleb Williams" was too good an artist not to perceive the advantage derivable from at least a somewhat similar process. Nothing is more clear than that every plot, worth the name, must be elaborated to its dénouement before any thing be attempted with the men. It is only with the *dénouement* constantly in view that we can give a plot its indispensable air of consequence, or causation, by making the incidents, and especially the tone at all points, tend to the development of the intention.

There is a radical error, I think, in the usual mode of constructing a story. Either history affords a thesis—or one is suggested by an incident of the day—or, at best, the author sets himself to work in the combination of striking events to form merely the basis of his narrative—designing, generally, to fill in with description, dialogue, or autorial comment,

whatever crevices of fact, or action, may, from page to page, render themselves apparent.

I prefer commencing with the consideration of an *effect*. Keeping originality *always* in view—for he is false to himself who ventures to dispense with so obvious and so easily attainable a source of interest—I say to myself, in the first place, "Of the innumerable effects, or impressions, of which the heart, the intellect, or (more generally) the soul is susceptible, what one shall I, on the present occasion, select?" Having chosen a novel, first, and secondly a vivid effect, I consider whether it can be best wrought by incident or tone—whether by ordinary incidents and peculiar tone, or the converse, or by peculiarity both of incident and tone—afterward looking about me (or rather within) for such combinations of event, or tone, as shall best aid me in the construction of the effect.

I have often thought how interesting a magazine paper might be written by any author who would—that is to say, who could—detail, step by step, the processes by which any one of his compositions attained its ultimate point of completion. Why such a paper has never been given to the world, I am much at a loss to say—but, perhaps, the autorial vanity has had more to do with the omission than any one other cause. Most writers—poets in especial—prefer having it understood that they compose by a species of fine frenzy—an ecstatic intuition—and would positively shudder at letting the public take a peep behind the scenes, at the elaborate and vacillating crudities of thought—at the true purposes seized only at the last moment—at the innumerable glimpses of idea that arrived not at the maturity of full view—at the fully matured fancies discarded in despair as unmanageable—at the cautious

selections and rejections—at the painful erasures and interpolations—in a word, at the wheels and pinions—the tackle for scene-shifting—the step-ladders and demon-traps—the cock's feathers, the red paint and the black patches, which, in ninety-nine cases out of the hundred, constitute the properties of the literary *histrio*.

I am aware, on the other hand, that the case is by no means common, in which an author is at all in condition to retrace the steps by which his conclusions have been attained. In general, suggestions, having arisen pell-mell, are pursued and forgotten in a similar manner.

For my own part, I have neither sympathy with the repugnance alluded to, nor, at any time, the least difficulty in recalling to mind the progressive steps of any of my compositions; and, since the interest of an analysis, or reconstruction, such as I have considered a *desideratum*, is quite independent of any real or fancied interest in the thing analyzed, it will not be regarded as a breach of decorum on my part to show the *modus operandi* by which some one of my own works was put together. I select "The Raven" as most generally known. It is my design to render it manifest that no one point in its composition is referable either to accident or intuition—that the work proceeded, step by step, to its completion with the precision and rigid consequence of a mathematical problem.

Let us dismiss, as irrelevant to the poem, *per se*, the circumstance—or say the necessity—which, in the first place, gave rise to the intention of composing *a* poem that should suit at once the popular and the critical taste.

We commence, then, with this intention.

The initial consideration was that of extent. If

any literary work is too long to be read at one sitting, we must be content to dispense with the immensely important effect derivable from unity of impression —for, if two sittings be required, the affairs of the world interfere, and every thing like totality is at once destroyed. But since, *ceteris paribus*, no poet can afford to dispense with *any thing* that may advance his design, it but remains to be seen whether there is, in extent, any advantage to counterbalance the loss of unity which attends it. Here I say no, at once. What we term a long poem, is, in fact, merely a succession of brief ones—that is to say, of brief poetical effects. It is needless to demonstrate that a poem is such, only inasmuch as it intensely excites, by elevating, the soul; and all intense excitements are, through a psychal necessity, brief. For this reason, at least one half of the "Paradise Lost" is essentially prose—a succession of poetical excitements interspersed, *inevitably*, with corresponding depressions—the whole being deprived, through the extremeness of its length, of the vastly important artistic element, or unity, of effect.

It appears evident, then, that there is a distinct limit, as regards length, to all works of literary art—the limit of a single sitting—and that, although in certain classes of prose composition, such as "Robinson Crusoe," (demanding no unity,) this limit may be advantageously overpassed, it can never properly be overpassed in a poem. Within this limit, the extent of a poem may be made to bear mathematical relation to its merit—in other words, to the excitement or elevation—again, in other words, to the degree of the true poetical effect which it is capable of inducing; for it is clear that the brevity must be in direct ratio of the intensity of the intended effect:—this, with one proviso—that a certain degree of du-

ration is absolutely requisite for the production of any effect at all.

Holding in view these considerations, as well as that degree of excitement which I deemed not above the popular, while not below the critical, taste, I reached at once what I conceived the proper *length* for my intended poem—a length of about one hundred lines. It is, in fact, a hundred and eight.

My next thought concerned the choice of an impression, or effect, to be conveyed: and here I may as well observe that, throughout the construction, I kept steadily in view the design of rendering the work *universally* appreciable. I should be carried too far out of my immediate topic were I to demonstrate a point upon which I have repeatedly insisted, and which, with the poetical, stands not in the slightest need of demonstration—the point, I mean, that Beauty is the sole legitimate province of the poem. A few words, however, in elucidation of my real meaning, which some of my friends have evinced a disposition to misrepresent. That pleasure which is at once the most intense, the most elevating, and the most pure, is, I believe, found in the contemplation of the beautiful. When, indeed, men speak of Beauty, they mean, precisely, not a quality, as is supposed, but an effect—they refer, in short, just to that intense and pure elevation of *soul—not* of intellect, or of heart—upon which I have commented, and which is experienced in consequence of contemplating "the beautiful." Now I designate Beauty as the province of the poem, merely because it is an obvious rule of Art that effects should be made to spring from direct causes—that objects should be attained through means best adapted for their attainment—no one as yet having been weak enough to deny that the peculiar elevation alluded to, is *most*

readily attained in the poem. Now the object, Truth, or the satisfaction of the intellect, and the object Passion, or the excitement of the heart, are, although attainable, to a certain extent, in poetry, far more readily attainable in prose. Truth, in fact, demands a precision, and Passion a *homeliness* (the truly passionate will comprehend me) which are absolutely antagonistic to that Beauty which, I maintain, is the excitement, or pleasurable elevation, of the soul. It by no means follows from any thing here said, that passion, or even truth, may not be introduced, and even profitably introduced, into a poem—for they may serve in elucidation, or aid the general effect, as do discords in music, by contrast—but the true artist will always contrive, first, to tone them into proper subservience to the predominant aim, and, secondly, to enveil them, as far as possible, in that Beauty which is the atmosphere and the essence of the poem.

Regarding, then, Beauty as my province, my next question referred to the *tone* of its highest manifestation—and all experience has shown that this tone is one of *sadness*. Beauty of whatever kind, in its supreme development, invariably excites the sensitive soul to tears. Melancholy is thus the most legitimate of all the poetical tones.

The length, the province, and the tone, being thus determined, I betook myself to ordinary induction, with the view of obtaining some artistic piquancy which might serve me as a key-note in the construction of the poem—some pivot upon which the whole structure might turn. In carefully thinking over all the usual artistic effects—or more properly *points*, in the theatrical sense—I did not fail to perceive immediately that no one had been so universally employed as that of the *refrain*. The univer-

sality of its employment sufficed to assure me of its intrinsic value, and spared me the necessity of submitting it to analysis. I considered it, however, with regard to its susceptibility of improvements, and soon saw it to be in a primitive condition. As commonly used, the *refrain*, or burden, not only is limited to lyric verse, but depends for its impression upon the force of monotone—both in sound and thought. The pleasure is deduced solely from the sense of identity—of repetition. I resolved to diversify, and so heighten, the effect, by adhering, in general, to the monotone of sound, while I continually varied that of thought: that is to say, I determined to produce continuously novel effects, by the variation of *the application* of the *refrain*—the *refrain* itself remaining, for the most part, unvaried.

These points being settled, I next bethought me of the *nature* of my *refrain*. Since its application was to be repeatedly varied, it was clear that the *refrain* itself must be brief, for there would have been an insurmountable difficulty in frequent variations of application in any sentence of length. In proportion to the brevity of the sentence, would, of course, be the facility of the variation. This led me at once to a single word as the best *refrain*.

The question now arose as to the *character* of the word. Having made up my mind to a *refrain*, the division of the poem into stanzas was, of course, a corollary: the *refrain* forming the close to each stanza. That such a close, to have force, must be sonorous and susceptible of protracted emphasis, admitted no doubt: and these considerations, inevitably led me to the long *o* as the most sonorous vowel, in connection with *r* as the most producible consonant.

The sound of the *refrain* being thus determined, it became necessary to select a word embodying

this sound, and at the same time in the fullest possible keeping with that melancholy which I had predetermined as the tone of the poem. In such a search it would have been absolutely impossible to overlook the word "Nevermore." In fact, it was the very first which presented itself.

The next *desideratum* was a pretext for the continuous use of the one word "nevermore." In observing the difficulty which I at once found in inventing a sufficiently plausible reason for its continuous repetition, I did not fail to perceive that this difficulty arose solely from the pre-assumption that the word was to be so continuously or monotonously spoken by *a human* being—I did not fail to perceive, in short, that the difficulty lay in the reconciliation of this monotony with the exercise of reason on the part of the creature repeating the word. Here, then, immediately arose the idea of a *non*-reasoning creature capable of speech; and, very naturally, a parrot, in the first instance, suggested itself, but was superseded forthwith by a Raven, as equally capable of speech, and infinitely more in keeping with the intended *tone*.

I had now gone so far as the conception of a Raven —the bird of ill omen—monotonously repeating the one word, "Nevermore," at the conclusion of each stanza, in a poem of melancholy tone, and in length about one hundred lines. Now, never losing sight of the object *supremeness*, or perfection, at all points, I asked myself—"Of all melancholy topics, what, according to the *universal* understanding of mankind, is the *most* melancholy?" Death—was the obvious reply. "And when," I said, "is this most melancholy of topics most poetical?" From what I have already explained at some length, the answer, here also, is obvious—"When it most closely allies itself to

Beauty: the death, then, of a beautiful woman is, unquestionably, the most poetical topic in the world—and equally is it beyond doubt that the lips best suited for such topic are those of a bereaved lover."

I had now to combine the two ideas, of a lover lamenting his deceased mistress and a Raven continuously repeating the word "Nevermore."—I had to combine these, bearing in mind my design of varying, at every turn, the *application* of the word repeated; but the only intelligible mode of such combination is that of imagining the Raven employing the word in answer to the queries of the lover. And here it was that I saw at once the opportunity afforded for the effect on which I had been depending —that is to say, the effect of the *variation of application.* I saw that I could make the first query propounded by the lover—the first query to which the Raven should reply "Nevermore"—that I could make this first query a commonplace one—the second less so—the third still less, and so on—until at length the lover, startled from his original *nonchalance* by the melancholy character of the word itself —by its frequent repetition—and by a consideration of the ominous reputation of the fowl that uttered it —is at length excited to superstition, and wildly propounds queries of a far different character—queries whose solution he has passionately at heart—propounds them half in superstition and half in that species of despair which delights in self-torture—propounds them not altogether because he believes in the prophetic or demoniac character of the bird (which, reason assures him, is merely repeating a lesson learned by rote) but because he experiences a frenzied pleasure in so modeling his questions as to receive from the *expected* "Nevermore" the most

delicious because the most intolerable of sorrow. Perceiving the opportunity thus afforded me—or, more strictly, thus forced upon me in the progress of the construction—I first established in mind the climax, or concluding query—that query to which "Nevermore" should be in the last place an answer—that query in reply to which this word "Nevermore" should involve the uttermost conceivable amount of sorrow and despair.

Here then the poem may be said to have its beginning—at the end, where all works of art should begin—for it was here, at this point of my preconsiderations, that I first put pen to paper in the composition of the stanza:

"Prophet," said I, "thing of evil! prophet still if bird or devil!
By that heaven that bends above us—by that God we both adore,
Tell this soul with sorrow laden, if within the distant Aidenn,
It shall clasp a sainted maiden whom the angels name Lenore—
Clasp a rare and radiant maiden whom the angels name Lenore."
Quoth the raven "Nevermore."

I composed this stanza, at this point, first that, by establishing the climax, I might the better vary and graduate, as regards seriousness and importance, the preceding queries of the lover—and, secondly, that I might definitely settle the rhythm, the metre, and the length and general arrangement of the stanza—as well as graduate the stanzas which were to precede, so that none of them might surpass this in rhythmical effect. Had I been able, in the subsiquent composition, to construct more vigorous stanzas, I should, without scruple, have purposely

enfeebled them, so as not to interfere with the climacteric effect.

And here I may as well say a few words of the versification. My first object (as usual) was originality. The extent to which this has been neglected, in versification, is one of the most unaccountable things in the world. Admitting that there is little possibility of variety in mere *rhythm*, it is still clear that the possible varieties of metre and stanza are absolutely infinite—and yet, *for centuries, no man, in verse, has ever done, or ever seemed to think of doing, an original thing.* The fact is, that originality (unless in minds of very unusual force) is by no means a matter, as some suppose, of impulse or intuition. In general, to be found, it must be elaborately sought, and although a positive merit of the highest class, demands in its attainment less of invention than negation.

Of course, I pretend to no originality in either the rhythm or metre of the "Raven." The former is trochaic—the latter is octameter acatalectic, alternating with heptameter catalectic repeated in the *refrain* of the fifth verse, and terminating with tetrameter catalectic. Less pedantically—the feet employed throughout (trochees) consist of a long syllable followed by a short: the first line of the stanza consists of eight of these feet—the second of seven and a half (in effect two-thirds) —the third of eight —the fourth of seven and a half—the fifth the same —the sixth three and a half. Now, each of these lines, taken individually, has been employed before, and what originality the "Raven" has, is in their combination *into stanza;* nothing even remotely approaching this combination has ever been attempted. The effect of this originality of combination is aided by other unusual, and some altogether novel effects,

arising from an extension of the application of the principles of rhyme and alliteration.

The next point to be considered was the mode of bringing together the lover and the Raven—and the first branch of this consideration was the *locale*. For this the most natural suggestion might seem to be a forest, or the fields—but it has always appeared to me that a close *circumscription of space* is absolutely necessary to the effect of insulated incident:—it has the force of a frame to a picture. It has an indisputable moral power in keeping concentrated the attention, and, of course, must not be confounded with mere unity of place.

I determined, then, to place the lover in his chamber—in a chamber rendered sacred to him by memories of her who had frequented it. The room is represented as richly furnished—this in mere pursuance of the ideas I have already explained on the subject of Beauty, as the sole true poetical thesis.

The *locale* being thus determined, I had now to introduce the bird—and the thought of introducing him through the window was inevitable. The idea of making the lover suppose, in the first instance, that the flapping of the wings of the bird against the shutter, is a "tapping" at the door, originated in a wish to increase, by prolonging, the reader's curiosity, and in a desire to admit the incidental effect arising from the lover's throwing open the door, finding all dark, and thence adopting the half-fancy that it was the spirit of his mistress that knocked.

I made the night tempestuous, first, to account for the Raven's seeking admission, and secondly, for the effect of contrast with the (physical) serenity within the chamber.

I made the bird alight on the bust of Pallas, also for the effect of contrast between the marble and the

plumage—it being understood that the bust was absolutely *suggested* by the bird—the bust of *Pallas* being chosen, first, as most in keeping with the scholarship of the lover, and, secondly, for the sonorousness of the word Pallas, itself.

About the middle of the poem, also, I have availed myself of the force of contrast, with a view of deepening the ultimate impression. For example, an air of the fantastic—approaching as nearly to the ludicrous as was admissible—is given to the Raven's entrance. He comes in "with many a flirt and flutter."

Not the *least obeisance made he*—not a moment stopped or stayed he.
But with mien of lord or lady, perched above my chamber door.

In the two stanzas which follow, the design is more obviously carried out:—

Then this ebony bird beguiling my sad fancy into smiling
By the *grave and stern decorum of the countenance it wore*,
"Though thy *crest be shorn and shaven* thou," I said, "art sure no craven.
Ghastly grim and ancient Raven wandering from the nightly shore—
Tell me what thy lordly name is on the Night's Plutonian shore?"
Quoth the Raven "Nevermore."

—

Much I marvelled *this ungainly fowl* to hear discourse so plainly,
Though its answer little meaning—little relevancy bore;
For we cannot help agreeing that no living human being
Ever yet was blessed with seeing bird above his chamber door—
Bird or beast upon the sculptured bust above his chamber door,
With such name as "Nevermore."

—

The effect of the *dénouement* being thus provided for, I immediately drop the fantastic for a tone of the most profound seriousness:—this tone commencing in the stanza directly following the one last quoted, with the line,

But the Raven, sitting lonely on that placid bust, spoke only, etc.

From this epoch the lover no longer jests—no longer sees any thing even of the fantastic in the Raven's demeanor. He speaks of him as a "grim, ungainly, ghastly, gaunt, and ominous bird of yore," and feels the "fiery eyes" burning into his "bosom's core." This revolution of thought, or fancy, on the lover's part, is intended to induce a similar one on the part of the reader—to bring the mind into a proper frame for the *dénouement*—which is now brought about as rapidly and as *directly* as possible.

With the *dénouement* proper—with the Raven's reply, "Nevermore," to the lover's final demand if he shall meet his mistress in another world—the poem, in its obvious phase, that of a simple narrative, may be said to have its completion. So far, every thing is within the limits of the accountable—of the real. A raven, having learned by rote the single word "Nevermore," and having escaped from the custody of its owner, is driven at midnight, through the violence of a storm, to seek admission at a window from which a light still gleams—the chamber-window of a student, occupied half in poring over a volume, half in dreaming of a beloved mistress deceased. The casement being thrown open at the fluttering of the bird's wings, the bird itself perches on the most convenient seat. out of the immediate reach of the student, who, amused by the incident and the oddity of the visitor's demeanor,

demands of it, in jest and without looking for a reply, its name. The raven addressed, answers with its customary word, "Nevermore"—a word which finds immediate echo in the melancholy heart of the student, who, giving utterance aloud to certain thoughts suggested by the occasion, is again startled by the fowl's repetition of "Nevermore." The student now guesses the state of the case, but is impelled, as I have before explained, by the human thirst for self-torture, and in part by superstition, to propound such queries to the bird as will bring him, the lover, the most of the luxury of sorrow, through the anticipated answer "Nevermore." With the indulgence, to the extreme, of this self-torture, the narration, in what I have termed its first or obvious phase, has a natural termination, and so far there has been no overstepping of the limits of the real.

But in subjects so handled, however skilfully, or with however vivid an array of incident, there is always a certain hardness or nakedness, which repels the artistical eye. Two things are invariably required—first, some amount of complexity, or more properly, adaptation; and, secondly, some amount of suggestiveness—some under current, however indefinite, of meaning. It is this latter, in especial, which imparts to a work of art so much of that *richness* (to borrow from colloquy a forcible term) which we are too fond of confounding with *the ideal.* It is the *excess* of the suggested meaning—it is the rendering this the upper instead of the under current of the theme—which turns into prose (and that of the very flattest kind) the so-called poetry of the so-called transcendentalists.

Holding these opinions, I added the two concluding stanzas of the poem—their suggestiveness being thus made to pervade all the narrative which

has preceded them. The under current of meaning is rendered first apparent in the lines—

"Take thy beak from out *my heart*, and take thy form from
off my door!"
Quoth the Raven "Nevermore!"

It will be observed that the words, "from out my heart," involve the first metaphorical expression in the poem. They, with the answer, "Nevermore," dispose the mind to seek a moral in all that has been previously narrated. The reader begins now to regard the Raven as emblematical—but it is not until the very last line of the very last stanza, that the intention of making him emblematical of *Mournful and Never-ending Remembrance* is permitted distinctly to be seen:

And the Raven, never flitting, still is sitting, still is sitting,
On the pallid bust of Pallas just above my chamber door;
And his eyes have all the seeming of a demon's that is
dreaming,
And the lamplight o'er him streaming throws his shadow on
the floor;
And my soul *from out that shadow* that lies floating on the
floor
Shall be lifted—nevermore.

THE COLLOQUY OF MONOS AND UNA

Μελλοντα ταυτα

Sophocles—Antig:

These things are in the future

Una. "Born again?"

Monos. Yes, fairest and best beloved Una, "born again." These were the words upon whose mystical meaning I had so long pondered, rejecting the explanations of the priesthood, until Death himself resolved for me the secret.

Una. Death!

Monos. How strangely, sweet Una, you echo my words! I observe, too, a vacillation in your step—a joyous inquietude in your eyes. You are confused and oppressed by the majestic novelty of the Life Eternal. Yes, it was of Death I spoke. And here how singularly sounds that word which of old was wont to bring terror to all hearts—throwing a mildew upon all pleasures!

Una. Ah, Death, the spectre which sate at all feasts! How often, Monos, did we lose ourselves in speculations upon its nature! How mysteriously did it act as a check to human bliss—saying unto it "thus far, and no farther!" That earnest mutual love, my own Monos, which burned within our bosoms—how vainly did we flatter ourselves, feeling happy in its first upspringing, that our happiness would strengthen with its strength! Alas! as it grew, so grew in our hearts the dread of that evil hour which was hurrying to separate us forever! Thus, in time, it became painful to love. Hate would have been mercy then.

Monos. Speak not here of these griefs, dear Una—mine, mine forever now!

Una. But the memory of past sorrow—is it not present joy? I have much to say yet of the things which have been. Above all, I burn to know the incidents of your own passage through the dark Valley and Shadow.

Monos. And when did the radiant Una ask anything of her Monos in vain? I will be minute in relating all—but at what point shall the weird narrative begin?

Una. At what point?

Monos. You have said.

Una. Monos, I comprehend you. In Death we have both learned the propensity of man to define the indefinable. I will not say, then, commence with the moment of life's cessation—but commence with that sad, sad instant when, the fever having abandoned you, you sank into a breathless and motionless torpor, and I pressed down your pallid eyelids with the passionate fingers of love.

Monos. One word first, my Una, in regard to man's general condition at this epoch. You will remember that one or two of the wise among our forefathers—wise in fact, although not in the world's esteem—had ventured to doubt the propriety of the term "improvement," as applied to the progress of our civilization. There were periods in each of the five or six centuries immediately preceding our dissolution, when arose some vigorous intellect, boldly contending for those principles whose truth appears now, to our disenfranchised reason, so utterly obvious—principles which should have taught our race to submit to the guidance of the natural laws, rather than attempt their control. At long intervals some master-minds appeared,

looking upon each advance in practical science as a retro-gradation in the true utility. Occasionally the poetic intellect—that intellect which we now feel to have been the most exalted of all—since those truths which to us were of the most enduring importance could only be reached by that *analogy* which speaks in proof-tones to the imagination alone, and to the unaided reason bears no weight—occasionally did this poetic intellect proceed a step farther in the evolving of the vague idea of the philosophic, and find in the mystic parable that tells of the tree of knowledge, and of its forbidden fruit, death-producing, a distinct intimation that knowledge was not meet for man in the infant condition of his soul. And these men—the poets—living and perishing amid the scorn of the "utilitarians"—of rough pedants, who arrogated to themselves a title which could have been properly applied only to the scorned—these men, the poets, pondered piningly, yet not unwisely, upon the ancient days when our wants were not more simple than our enjoyments were keen—days when *mirth* was a word unknown, so solemnly deep-toned was happiness—holy, august and blissful days, when blue rivers ran undamned, between hills unhewn, into far forest solitudes, primæval, odorous, and unexplored.

Yet these noble exceptions from the general misrule served but to strengthen it by opposition. Alas! we had fallen upon the most evil of all our evil days. The great "movement"—that was the cant term—went on: a diseased commotion, moral and physical. Art—the Arts—arose supreme, and, once enthroned, cast chains upon the intellect which had elevated them to power. Man, because he could not but acknowledge the majesty of Nature, fell into childish exultation at his acquired and still-

increasing dominion over her elements. Even while he stalked a God in his own fancy, an infantine imbecility came over him. As might be supposed from the origin of his disorder, he grew infected with system, and with abstraction. He enwrapped himself in generalities. Among other odd ideas, that of universal equality gained ground; and in the face of analogy and of God—in despite of the loud warning voice of the laws of *gradation* so visibly pervading all things in Earth and Heaven—wild attempts at an omni-prevalent Democracy were made. Yet this evil sprang necessarily from the leading evil, Knowledge. Man could not both know and succumb. Meantime huge smoking cities arose, innumerable. Green leaves shrank before the hot breath of furnaces. The fair face of Nature was deformed as with the ravages of some loathsome disease. And methinks, sweet Una, even our slumbering sense of the forced and of the far-fetched might have arrested us here. But now it appears that we had worked out our own destruction in the perversion of our *taste*, or rather in the blind neglect of its culture in the schools. For, in truth, it was at this crisis that taste alone—that faculty which, holding a middle position between the pure intellect and the moral sense, could never safely have been disregarded—it was now that taste alone could have led us gently back to Beauty, to Nature, and to Life. But alas for the pure contemplative spirit and majestic intuition of Plato! Alas for the μουσικη which he justly regarded as an all-sufficient education for the soul! Alas for him and for it!—since both were most desperately needed when both were most entirely forgotten or despised.*

*"It will be hard to discover a better [method of education] than that which the experience of so many ages has already

Pascal, a philosopher whom we both love, has said, how truly!—"*que tout notre raisonnement se rèduit à céder au sentiment*"; and it is not impossible that the sentiment of the natural, had time permitted it, would have regained its old ascendency over the harsh mathematical reason of the schools. But this thing was not to be. Prematurely induced by intemperance of knowledge, the old age of the world drew on. This the mass of mankind saw not, or, living lustily although unhappily, affected not to see. But, for myself, the Earth's records had taught me to look for widest ruin as the price of highest civilization. I had imbibed a prescience of our Fate from comparison of China the simple and enduring, with Assyria the architect, with Egypt the astrologer, with Nubia, more crafty than either, the turbulent mother of all Arts. In history* of these regions I met with a ray from the Future. The individual artificialities of the three latter were local diseases of the Earth, and in their individual overthrows we had seen local remedies applied; but for the infected world at large I could anticipate no regeneration save in death. That man, as a race, should not become extinct, I saw that he must be "*born again.*"

discovered; and this may be summed up as consisting in gymnastics for the body, and *music* for the soul."—Repub. lib. 2. "For this reason is a musical education most essential; since it causes Rhythm and Harmony to penetrate most intimately into the soul, taking the strongest hold upon it, filling it with *beauty* and making the man *beautiful-minded*. . . . . He will praise and admire *the beautiful;* will receive it with joy into his soul, will feed upon it, and *assimilate his own condition with it.*" —Ibid. lib. 3. Music (μουσικη) had, however, among the Athenians, a far more comprehensive signification than with us. It included not only the harmonies of time and of tune, but the poetic diction, sentiment and creation, each in its widest sense. The study of *music* was with them, in fact, the general cultivation of the taste—of that which recognizes the beautiful—in contra-distinction from reason, which deals only with the true.

* "History," from ιστορειν, to contemplate

And now it was, fairest and dearest, that we wrapped our spirits, daily, in dreams. Now it was that, in twilight, we discoursed of the days to come, when the Art-scarred surface of the Earth, having undergone that purification* which alone could efface its rectangular obscenities, should clothe itself anew in the verdure and the mountain-slopes and the smiling waters of Paradise, and be rendered at length a fit dwelling-place for man:—for man the Death-purged—for man to whose now exalted intellect there should be poison in knowledge no more—for the redeemed, regenerated, blissful, and now immortal, but still for the *material*, man.

Una.—Well do I remember these conversations, dear Monos; but the epoch of the fiery overthrow was not so near at hand as we believed, and as the corruption you indicate did surely warrant us in believing. Men lived; and died individually. You yourself sickened, and passed into the grave; and thither your constant Una speedily followed you. And though the century which has since elapsed, and whose conclusion brings us thus together once more, tortured our slumbering senses with no impatience of duration, yet, my Monos, it was a century still.

Monos. Say, rather, a point in the vague infinity. Unquestionably, it was in the Earth's dotage that I died. Wearied at heart with anxieties which had their origin in the general turmoil and decay, I succumbed to the fierce fever. After some few days of pain, and many of dreamy delirium replete with ecstasy, the manifestations of which you mistook for pain, while I longed but was impotent to undeceive you—after some days there

* The word "*purification*" seems here to be used with reference to its root in the Greek πυρ, fire.

came upon me, as you have said, a breathless and motionless torpor; and this was termed *Death* by those who stood around me.

Words are vague things. My condition did not deprive me of sentience. It appeared to me not greatly dissimilar to the extreme quiescence of him, who, having slumbered long and profoundly, lying motionless and fully prostrate in a midsummer noon, begins to steal slowly back into consciousness, through the mere sufficiency of his sleep, and without being awakened by external disturbances.

I breathed no longer. The pulses were still. The heart had ceased to beat. Volition had not departed, but was powerless. The senses were unusually active, although eccentrically so—assuming often each other's functions at random. The taste and the smell were inextricably confounded, and became one sentiment, abnormal and intense. The rose-water with which your tenderness had moistened my lips to the last, affected me with sweet fancies of flowers—fantastic flowers, far more lovely than any of the old Earth, but whose prototypes we have here blooming around us. The eyelids, transparent and bloodless, offered no complete impediment to vision. As volition was in abeyance, the balls could not roll in their sockets—but all objects within the range of the visual hemisphere were seen with more or less distinctness; the rays which fell upon the external retina, or into the corner of the eye, producing a more vivid effect than those which struck the front or interior surface. Yet, in the former instance, this effect was so far anomalous that I appreciated it only as *sound*—sound sweet or discordant as the matters presenting themselves at my side were light or dark in shade—curved or angular in outline. The hearing, at the same

time, although excited in degree, was not irregular in action—estimating real sounds with an extravagance of precision, not less than of sensibility. Touch had undergone a modification more peculiar. Its impressions were tardily received, but pertinaciously retained, and resulted always in the highest physical pleasure. Thus the pressure of your sweet fingers upon my eyelids, at first only recognized through vision, at length, long after their removal, filled my whole being with a sensual delight immeasurable. I say with a sensual delight. *All* my perceptions were purely sensual. The materials furnished the passive brain by the senses were not in the least degree wrought into shape by the deceased understanding. Of pain there was some little; of pleasure there was much; but of moral pain or pleasure none at all. Thus your wild sobs floated into my ear with all their mournful cadences, and were appreciated in their every variation of sad tone; but they were soft musical sounds and no more; they conveyed to the extinct reason no intimation of the sorrows which gave them birth; while the large and constant tears which fell upon my face, telling the bystanders of a heart which broke, thrilled every fibre of my frame with ecstasy alone. And this was in truth the *Death* of which these bystanders spoke reverently, in low whispers—you, sweet Una, gaspingly, with loud cries.

They attired me for the coffin—three or four dark figures which flitted busily to and fro. As these crossed the direct line of my vision they affected me as *forms;* but upon passing to my side their images impressed me with the idea of shrieks, groans, and other dismal expressions of terror, or horror, or of wo. You alone, habited in a white robe, passed in all directions musically about me.

The day waned; and, as its light faded away, I became possessed by a vague uneasiness—an anxiety such as the sleeper feels when sad real sounds fall continuously within his ear—low distant bell-tones, solemn, at long but equal intervals, and commingling with melancholy dreams. Night arrived; and with its shadows a heavy discomfort. It oppressed my limbs with the oppression of some dull weight, and was palpable. There was also a moaning sound, not unlike the distant reverberation of surf, but more continuous, which, beginning with the first twilight, had grown in strength with the darkness. Suddenly lights were brought into the room, and this reverberation became forthwith interrupted into frequent unequal bursts of the same sound, but less dreary and less distinct. The ponderous oppression was in a great measure relieved; and, issuing from the flame of each lamp, (for there were many,) there flowed unbrokenly into my ears a strain of melodious monotone. And when now, dear Una, approaching the bed upon which I lay outstretched, you sat gently by my side, breathing odor from your sweet lips, and pressing them upon my brow, there arose tremulously within my bosom, and mingling with the merely physical sensations which circumstances had called forth, a something akin to sentiment itself—a feeling that, half appreciating, half responded to your earnest love and sorrow; but this feeling took no root in the pulseless heart, and seemed indeed rather a shadow than a reality, and faded quickly away, first into extreme quiescence, and then into a purely sensual pleasure as before.

And now, from the wreck and the chaos of the usual senses, there appeared to have arisen within me a sixth, all perfect. In its exercise I found a

wild delight—yet a delight still physical, inasmuch as the understanding had in it no part. Motion in the animal frame had fully ceased. No muscle quivered; no nerve thrilled; no artery throbbed. But there seemed to have sprung up in the brain, *that* of which no words could convey to the merely human intelligence even an indistinct conception. Let me term it a mental pendulous pulsation. It was the moral embodiment of man's abstract idea of *Time*. By the absolute equalization of this movement—or of such as this—had the cycles of the firmamental orbs themselves, been adjusted. By its aid I measured the irregularities of the clock upon the mantel, and of the watches of the attendants. Their tickings came sonorously to my ears. The slightest deviations from the true proportion—and these deviations were omniprævalent—affected me just as violations of abstract truth were wont, on earth, to affect the moral sense. Although no two of the time-pieces in the chamber struck the individual seconds accurately together, yet I had no difficulty in holding steadily in mind the tones, and the respective momentary errors of each. And this —this keen, perfect, self-existing sentiment of *duration*—this sentiment existing (as man could not possibly have conceived it to exist) independently of any succession of events—this idea—this sixth sense, upspringing from the ashes of the rest, was the first obvious and certain step of the intemporal soul upon the threshold of the temporal Eternity.

It was midnight; and you still sat by my side. All others had departed from the chamber of Death. They had deposited me in the coffin. The lamps burned flickeringly; for this I knew by the tremulousness of the monotonous strains. But, suddenly these strains diminished in distinctness and in

volume. Finally they ceased. The perfume in my nostrils died away. Forms affected my vision no longer. The oppression of the Darkness uplifted itself from my bosom. A dull shock like that of electricity pervaded my frame, and was followed by total loss of the idea of contact. All of what man has termed sense was merged in the sole consciousness of entity, and in the one abiding sentiment of duration. The mortal body had been at length stricken with the hand of the deadly *Decay*.

Yet had not all of sentience departed; for the consciousness and the sentiment remaining supplied some of its functions by a lethargic intuition. I appreciated the direful change now in operation upon the flesh, and, as the dreamer is sometimes aware of the bodily presence of one who leans over him, so, sweet Una, I still dully felt that you sat by my side. So, too, when the noon of the second day came, I was not unconscious of those movements which displaced you from my side, which confined me within the coffin, which deposited me within the hearse, which bore me to the grave, which lowered me within it, which heaped heavily the mould upon me, and which thus left me, in blackness and corruption, to my sad and solemn slumbers with the worm.

And here, in the prison-house which has few secrets to disclose, there rolled away days and weeks and months; and the soul watched narrowly each second as it flew, and, without effort, took record of its flight—without effort and without object.

A year passed. The consciousness of *being* had grown hourly more indistinct, and that of mere *locality* had, in great measure, usurped its position. The idea of entity was becoming merged in that of *place*. The narrow space immediately surrounding what had been the body, was now growing to be the

body itself. At length, as often happens to the sleeper (by sleep and its world alone is *Death* imagined —at length, as sometimes happened on Earth to the deep slumberer, when some flitting light half startled him into awaking, yet left him half enveloped in dreams—so to me, in the strict embrace of the *Shadow*, came *that* light which alone might have had power to startle—the light of enduring *Love*. Men toiled at the grave in which I lay darkling. They upthrew the damp earth. Upon my mouldering bones there descended the coffin of Una.

And now again all was void. That nebulous light had been extinguished. That feeble thrill had vibrated itself into quiescence. Many *lustra* had supervened. Dust had returned to dust. The worm had food no more. The sense of being had at length utterly departed, and there reigned in its stead—instead of all things—dominant and perpetual —the autocrats *Place* and *Time*. For *that* which *was not*—for that which had no form—for that which had no thought—for that which had no sentience—for that which was soulless, yet of which matter formed no portion—for all this nothingness, yet for all this immortality, the grave was still a home, and the corrosive hours, co-mates.

THE
CONVERSATION OF EIROS AND CHARMION

Πυρ σοι προσοισω
I will bring fire to thee.
Euripides—Androm:

EIROS

WHY do you call me Eiros?

CHARMION

So henceforward will you always be called. You must forget, too, *my* earthly name, and speak to me as Charmion.

EIROS

This is indeed no dream!

CHARMION

Dreams are with us no more;—but of these mysteries anon. I rejoice to see you looking life-like and rational. The film of the shadow has already passed from off your eyes. Be of heart, and fear nothing. Your allotted days of stupor have expired; and, to-morrow, I will myself induct you into the full joys and wonders of your novel existence.

EIROS

True—I feel no stupor—none at all. The wild sickness and the terrible darkness have left me, and

I hear no longer that mad, rushing, horrible sound, like the "voice of many waters." Yet my senses are bewildered, Charmion, with the keenness of their perception of *the new*.

CHARMION

A few days will remove all this;—but I fully understand you, and feel for you. It is now ten earthly years since I underwent what you undergo—yet the remembrance of it hangs by me still. You have now suffered all of pain, however, which you will suffer in Aidenn.

EIROS

In Aidenn?

CHARMION

In Aidenn.

EIROS

Oh God!—pity me, Charmion!—I am overburthened with the majesty of all things—of the unknown now known—of the speculative Future merged in the august and certain Present.

CHARMION.

Grapple not now with such thoughts. To-morrow we will speak of this. Your mind wavers, and its agitation will find relief in the exercise of simple memories. Look not around, nor forward—but back. I am burning with anxiety to hear the details of that stupendous event which threw you among us. Tell me of it. Let us converse of familiar things, in the old familiar language of the world which has so fearfully perished.

EIROS

Most fearfully, fearfully!—this is indeed no dream.

CHARMION

Dreams are no more. Was I much mourned, my Eiros?

EIROS

Mourned, Charmion?—oh deeply. To that last hour of all, there hung a cloud of intense gloom and devout sorrow over your household.

CHARMION

And that last hour—speak of it. Remember that, beyond the naked fact of the catastrophe itself, I know nothing. When, coming out from among mankind, I passed into Night through the Grave—at that period, if I remember aright, the calamity which overwhelmed you was utterly unanticipated. But, indeed, I knew little of the speculative philosophy of the day.

EIROS

The individual calamity was, as you say, entirely unanticipated; but analogous misfortunes had been long a subject of discussion with astronomers. I need scarce tell you, my friend, that, even when you left us, men had agreed to understand those passages in the most holy writings which speak of the final destructions of all things by fire, as having reference to the orb of the earth alone. But in regard to the immediate agency of the ruin, speculation had been at fault from that epoch in astronomical knowledge in which the comets were divested of the terrors

of flame. The very moderate density of these bodies had been well established. They had been observed to pass among the satellites of Jupiter, without bringing about any sensible alteration either in the masses or in the orbits of these secondary planets. We had long regarded the wanderers as vapory creations of inconceivable tenuity, and as altogether incapable of doing injury to our substantial globe, even in the event of contact. But contact was not in any degree dreaded; for the elements of all the comets were accurately known. That among *them* we should look for the agency of the threatened fiery destruction had been for many years considered an inadmissible idea. But wonders and wild fancies had been, of late days, strangely rife among mankind; and, although it was only with a few of the ignorant that actual apprehension prevailed, upon the announcement by astronomers of a *new* comet, yet this announcement was generally received with I know not what of agitation and mistrust.

The elements of the strange orb were immediately calculated, and it was at once conceded by all observers, that its path, at perihelion, would bring it into very close proximity with the earth. There were two or three astronomers, of secondary note, who resolutely maintained that a contact was inevitable. I cannot very well express to you the effect of this intelligence upon the people. For a few short days they would not believe an assertion which their intellect, so long employed among worldly considerations, could not in any manner grasp. But the truth of a vitally important fact soon makes its way into the understanding of even the most stolid. Finally, all men saw that astronomical knowledge lied not, and they awaited the comet.

Its approach was not, at first, seemingly rapid; nor was its appearance of very unusual character. It was of a dull red, and had little perceptible train. For seven or eight days we saw no material increase in its apparent diameter, and but a partial alteration in its color. Meantime, the ordinary affairs of men were discarded, and all interest absorbed in a growing discussion, instituted by the philosophic, in respect to the cometary nature. Even the grossly ignorant aroused their sluggish capacities to such considerations. The learned *now* gave their intellect—their soul—to no such points as the allaying of fear, or to the sustenance of loved theory. They sought—they panted for right views. They groaned for perfected knowledge. *Truth* arose in the purity of her strength and exceeding majesty, and the wise bowed down and adored.

That material injury to our globe or to its inhabitants would result from the apprehended contact, was an opinion which hourly lost ground among the wise; and the wise were now freely permitted to rule the reason and the fancy of the crowd. It was demonstrated, that the density of the comet's *nucleus* was far less than that of our rarest gas; and the harmless passage of a similar visitor among the satellites of Jupiter was a point strongly insisted upon, and which served greatly to allay terror. Theologists, with an earnestness fear-enkindled, dwelt upon the biblical prophecies, and expounded them to the people with a directness and simplicity of which no previous instance had been known. That the final destruction of the earth must be brought about by the agency of fire, was urged with a spirit that enforced every where conviction; and that the comets were of no fiery nature (as all men now knew) was a truth which relieved all, in a great

measure, from the apprehension of the great calamity foretold. It is noticeable that the popular prejudices and vulgar errors in regard to pestilences and wars—errors which were wont to prevail upon every appearance of a comet—were now altogether unknown. As if by some sudden convulsive exertion, reason had at once hurled superstition from her throne. The feeblest intellect had derived vigor from excessive interest.

What minor evils might arise from the contact were points of elaborate question. The learned spoke of slight geological disturbances, of probable alterations in climate, and consequently in vegetation; of possible magnetic and electric influences. Many held that no visible or perceptible effect would in any manner be produced. While such discussions were going on, their subject gradually approached, growing larger in apparent diameter, and of a more brilliant lustre. Mankind grew paler as it came. All human operations were suspended.

There was an epoch in the course of the general sentiment when the comet had attained, at length, a size surpassing that of any previously recorded visitation. The people now, dismissing any lingering hope that the astronomers were wrong, experienced all the certainty of evil. The chimerical aspect of their terror was gone. The hearts of the stoutest of our race beat violently within their bosoms. A very few days sufficed, however, to merge even such feelings in sentiments more unendurable. We could no longer apply to the strange orb any *accustomed* thoughts. Its *historical* attributes had disappeared. It oppressed us with a hideous *novelty* of emotion. We saw it not as an astronomical phenomenon in the heavens, but as an incubus

upon our hearts, and a shadow upon our brains. It had taken, with inconceivable rapidity, the character of a gigantic mantle of rare flame, extending from horizon to horizon.

Yet a day, and men breathed with greater freedom. It was clear that we were already within the influence of the comet; yet we lived. We even felt an unusual elasticity of frame and vivacity of mind. The exceeding tenuity of the object of our dread was apparent; for all heavenly objects were plainly visible through it. Meantime, our vegetation had perceptibly altered; and we gained faith, from this predicted circumstance, in the foresight of the wise. A wild luxuriance of foliage, utterly unknown before, burst out upon every vegetable thing.

Yet another day—and the evil was not altogether upon us. It was now evident that its nucleus would first reach us. A wild change had come over all men; and the first sense of *pain* was the wild signal for general lamentation and horror. This first sense of pain lay in a rigorous constriction of the breast and lungs, and an insufferable dryness of the skin. It could not be denied that our atmosphere was radically affected; the conformation of this atmosphere and the possible modifications to which it might be subjected, were now the topics of discussion. The result of investigation sent an electric thrill of the intensest terror through the universal heart of man.

It had been long known that the air which encircled us was a compound of oxygen and nitrogen gases, in the proportion of twenty-one measures of oxygen, and seventy-nine of nitrogen, in every one hundred of the atmosphere. Oxygen, which was the principle of combustion, and the vehicle of heat, was absolutely necessary to the support of animal life, and was the

most powerful and energetic agent in nature. Nitrogen, on the contrary, was incapable of supporting either animal life or flame. An unnatural excess of oxygen would result, it had been ascertained, in just such an elevation of the animal spirits as we had latterly experienced. It was the pursuit, the extension of the idea, which had engendered awe. What would be the result of *a total extraction of the nitrogen?* A combustion irresistible, all-devouring, omni-prevalent, immediate;—the entire fulfilment, in all their minute and terrible details, of the fiery and horror-inspiring denunciations of the prophecies of the Holy Book.

Why need I paint, Charmion, the now disenchained frenzy of mankind? That tenuity in the comet which had previously inspired us with hope, was now the source of the bitterness of despair. In its impalpable gaseous character we clearly perceived the consummation of Fate. Meantime a day again passed—bearing away with it the last shadow of Hope. We gasped in the rapid modification of the air. The red blood bounded tumultuously through its strict channels. A furious delirium possessed all men; and, with arms rigidly outstretched towards the threatening heavens, they trembled and shrieked aloud. But the nucleus of the destroyer was now upon us;—even here in Aidenn, I shudder while I speak. Let me be brief—brief as the ruin that overwhelmed. For a moment there was a wild lurid light alone, visiting and penetrating all things. Then—let us bow down, Charmion, before the excessive majesty of the great God!—then, there came a shouting and pervading sound, as if from the mouth itself of HIM; while the whole incumbent mass of ether in which we existed, burst at once into a species of intense flame, for whose surpassing

brilliancy and all-fervid heat even the angels in the high Heaven of pure knowledge have no name. Thus ended all.

THE LITERATI

OF CRITICISM—PUBLIC AND PRIVATE

[In 1846, Mr. Poe published in *The Lady's Book* a series of six articles, entitled "The Literati of New-York City," in which he professed to give "some honest opinions at random respecting their autorial merits, with occasional words of personality." The series was introduced by the following paragraphs, and the personal sketches were given in the order in which they are here reprinted, from "George Bush" to "Richard Adams Locke." The other notices of American and foreign writers, were contributed by Mr. Poe to various journals, chiefly in the last four or five years of his life.]

IN a criticism on Bryant I was at some pains in pointing out the distinction between the popular "opinion" of the merits of cotemporary authors, and that held and expressed of them in private literary society. The former species of "opinion" can be called "opinion" only by courtesy. It is the public's own, just as we consider a book our own when we have bought it. In general, this opinion is adopted from the journals of the day, and I have endeavored to show that the cases are rare indeed in which these journals express any other sentiment about books than such as may be attributed directly or indirectly to the authors of the books. The most "popular," the most "successful" writers among us, (for a brief period, at least,) are, ninety-nine times out of a hundred, persons of mere address, perseverance, effrontery—in a word, busybodies, toadies, quacks. These people easily suc-

ceed in *boring* editors (whose attention is too often entirely engrossed by politics or other "business" matter) into the admission of favorite notices written or caused to be written by interested parties—or, at least, into the admission of *some* notice where, under ordinary circumstances, *no* notice would be given at all. In this way ephemeral "reputations" are manufactured, which, for the most part, serve all the purposes designed—that is to say, the putting money into the purse of the quack and the quack's publisher; for there never was a quack who could be brought to comprehend the value of mere fame. Now, men of genius will not resort to these manœuvres, because genius involves in its very essence a scorn of chicanery; and thus for a time the quacks always get the advantage of them, both in respect to pecuniary profit and what *appears* to be public esteem.

There is another point of view, too. Your literary quacks court, in especial, the personal acquaintance of those "connected with the press." Now these latter, even when penning a voluntary, that is to say, an uninstigated notice of the book of an acquaintance, feel as if writing not so much for the eye of the public as for the eye of the acquaintance, and the notice is fashioned accordingly. The bad points of the work are slurred over, and the good ones brought out into the best light, all this through a feeling akin to that which makes it unpleasant to speak ill of one to one's face. In the case of men of genius, editors, as a general rule, have no such delicacy—for the simple reason that, as a general rule, they have no acquaintance with these men of genius, a class proverbial for shunning society.

But the very editors who hesitate at saying in print an ill word of an author personally known, are

usually the most frank in speaking about him privately. In literary society, they seem bent upon avenging the wrongs self-inflicted upon their own consciences. Here, accordingly, the quack is treated as he deserves—even a little more harshly than he deserves—by way of striking a balance. True merit, on the same principle, is apt to be slightly overrated; but, upon the whole, there is a close approximation to absolute honesty of opinion; and this honesty is farther secured by the mere trouble to which it puts one in conversation to model one's countenance to a falsehood. We place on paper without hesitation a tissue of flatteries, to which in society we could not give utterance, for our lives, without either blushing or laughing outright.

For these reasons there exists a very remarkable discrepancy between the apparent public opinion of any given author's merits, and the opinion which is expressed of him orally by those who are best qualified to judge. For example, Mr. Hawthorne, the author of "Twice-Told Tales," is scarcely recognised by the press or by the public, and when noticed at all, is noticed merely to be damned by faint praise. Now, my own opinion of him is, that, although his walk is limited, and he is fairly to be charged with mannerism, treating all subjects in a similar tone of dreamy *inuendo*, yet in this walk he evinces extraordinary genius, having no rival either in America or elsewhere—and this opinion I have never heard gainsaid by any one literary person in the country. That this opinion, however, is a spoken and not a written one, is referable to the facts, first, that Mr. Hawthorne *is* a poor man, and, second, that he *is not* an ubiquitous quack.

Again, of Mr. Longfellow, who, although a little quacky *per se*, has, through his social and literary

position as a man of property and a professor at Harvard, a whole legion of active quacks at his control—of *him* what is the apparent popular opinion? Of course, that he is a poetical phenomenon, as entirely without fault, as is the luxurious paper upon which his poems are invariably borne to the public eye. In private society he is regarded with one voice as a poet of far more than usual ability, a skilful artist and a well-read man, but as less remarkable in either capacity than as a determined imitator and a dexterous adapter of the ideas of other people. For years I have conversed with no literary person who did not entertain precisely these ideas of Professor L.; and, in fact, on all literary topics, there is in society a seemingly wonderful coincidence of opinion. The author accustomed to seclusion, and mingling for the first time with those who have been associated with him only through their works, is astonished and delighted at finding common to all whom he meets, conclusions which he had blindly fancied were attained by himself alone, and in opposition to the judgment of mankind.

In the series of papers which I now propose, my design is, in giving my own unbiased opinion of the *literati* (male and female) of New York, to give at the same time very closely, if not with absolute accuracy, that of conversational society in literary circles. It must be expected, of course, that, in innumerable particulars, I shall differ from the voice, that is to say, from what appears to be the voice of the public —but this is a matter of no consequence whatever.

New York literature may be taken as a fair representation of that of the country at large. The city itself is the focus of American letters. Its authors include, perhaps, one-fourth of all in America, and the influence they exert on their

brethren, if seemingly silent, is not the less extensive and decisive. As I shall have to speak of many individuals, my limits will not permit me to speak of them otherwise than in brief; but this brevity will be merely consistent with the design, which is that of simple *opinion*, with little of either argument or detail. With one or two exceptions, I am well acquainted with every author to be introduced, and I shall avail myself of the acquaintance to convey, generally, some idea of the personal appearance of all who, in this regard, would be likely to interest my readers. As any precise order or arrangement seems unnecessary and may be inconvenient, I shall maintain none. It will be understood that, without reference to supposed merit or demerit, each individual is introduced absolutely at random.

GEORGE BUSH

THE REV. GEORGE BUSH is Professor of Hebrew in the University of New York, and has long been distinguished for the extent and variety of his attainments in oriental literature; indeed, as an oriental linguist, it is probable that he has no equal among us. He has published a great deal, and his books have always the good fortune to attract attention throughout the civilized world. His "Treatise on the Millenium" is, perhaps, that of his earlier compositions by which he is most extensively as well as most favorably known. Of late days he has created a singular commotion in the realm of theology, by his "Anastasis, or the Doctrine of the Resurrection: in which it is shown that the Doctrine of the Resurrection of the Body is not sanctioned by Reason or Revelation." This work has been zealously attacked, and as zealously defended by the professor and his friends. There can be no doubt that, up to this period, the Bushites have had the best of the battle. The "Anastasis" is lucidly, succinctly, vigorously, and logically written, and proves, in my opinion, everything that it attempts—provided we admit the imaginary axioms from which it starts; and this is as much as can be well said of any theological disquisition under the sun. It might be hinted, too, in reference as well to Professor Bush as to his opponents, "*que la plupart des sectes ont raison dans une bonne partie de ce qu'elles avancent, mais non pas en ce qu'elles nient.*" A subsequent work on "The Soul," by the author of "Anastasis," has made nearly as much noise as the "Anastasis" itself.

Taylor, who wrote so ingeniously "The Natural History of Enthusiasm," might have derived many a valuable hint from the study of Professor Bush. No man is more ardent in his theories; and these latter are neither few nor commonplace. He is a Mesmerist and a Swedenborgian—has lately been engaged in editing Swedenborg's works, publishing them in numbers. He converses with fervor, and often with eloquence. Very probably he will establish an independent church.

He is one of the most amiable men in the world, universally respected and beloved. His frank, unpretending simplicity of demeanor, is especially winning.

In person he is tall, nearly six feet, and spare, with large bones. His countenance expresses rather benevolence and profound earnestness, than high intelligence. The eyes are piercing; the other features, in general, massive. The forehead, phrenologically, indicates causality and comparison, with deficient ideality—the organization which induces strict logicality from insufficient premises. He walks with a slouching gait and with an air of abstraction. His dress is exceedingly plain. In respect to the arrangement about his study, he has many of the Magliabechian habits. He is, perhaps, fifty-five years of age, and seems to enjoy good health.

GEORGE H. COLTON

MR. COLTON is noted as the author of "Tecumseh," and as the originator and editor of "The American Review," a Whig magazine of the higher (that is to say, of the five dollar) class. I must not be understood as meaning any disrespect to the work. It is, in my opinion, by far the best of its order in this country, and is supported in the way of contribution by many of the very noblest intellects. Mr. Colton, if in nothing else, has shown himself a man of genius in his successful establishment of the magazine within so brief a period. It is now commencing its second year, and I can say, from my own personal knowledge that its circulation exceeds two thousand—it is probably about two thousand five hundred. So marked and immediate a success has never been attained by any of our five dollar magazines, with the exception of "The Southern Literary Messenger," which, in the course of nineteen months, (subsequent to the seventh from its commencement,) attained a circulation of rather more than five thousand.

I cannot conscientiously call Mr. Colton a good editor, although I think that he will finally be so. He improves wonderfully with experience. His present defects are timidity and a lurking taint of partiality, amounting to positive prejudice (in the vulgar sense) for the literature of the Puritans. I do not think, however, that he is at all aware of such prepossession. His taste is rather unexceptionable than positively good. He has not, perhaps, suffi-

cient fire within himself to appreciate it in others. Nevertheless, he endeavors to do so, and in this endeavor is not inapt to take opinions at secondhand—to adopt, I mean, the opinions of others. He is nervous, and a very trifling difficulty disconcerts him, without getting the better of a sort of dogged perseverance, which will make a thoroughly successful man of him in the end. He is (classically) well educated.

As a poet he has done better things than "Tecumseh," in whose length he has committed a radical and irreparable error, sufficient in itself to destroy a far better book. Some portions of it are truly poetical; very many portions belong to a high order of eloquence; it is invariably well versified, and has no glaring defects, but, upon the whole, is insufferably tedious. Some of the author's shorter compositions, published anonymously in his magazine, have afforded indications even of genius.

Mr. Colton is marked in his personal appearance. He is probably not more than thirty, but an air of constant thought (with a pair of spectacles) causes him to seem somewhat older. He is about five feet eight or nine in height, and fairly proportioned—neither stout nor thin. His forehead is quite intellectual. His mouth has a peculiar expression difficult to describe. Hair light and generally in disorder. He converses fluently, and, upon the whole, well, but grandiloquently, and with a tone half tragical half pulpital.

In character he is in the highest degree estimable, a most sincere, high-minded, and altogether honorable man. He is unmarried.

N. P. WILLIS

WHATEVER may be thought of Mr. Willis's talents, there can be no doubt about the fact that, both as an author and as a man, he has made a good deal of noise in the world—at least for an American. His literary life, in especial, has been one continual *émeute;* but then his literary character is modified or impelled in a very remarkable degree by his personal one. His success (for in point of fame, if of nothing else, he has certainly been successful) is to be attributed, one-third to his mental ability and two-thirds to his physical temperament—the latter goading him into the accomplishment of what the former merely gave him the means of accomplishing.

At a very early age Mr. Willis seems to have arrived at an understanding that, in a republic such as ours, the *mere* man of letters must ever be a cipher, and endeavored, accordingly, to unite the *éclat* of the littérateur with that of the man of fashion or of society. He "pushed himself," went much into the world, made friends with the gentler sex, "delivered" poetical addresses, wrote "scriptural" poems, travelled, sought the intimacy of noted women, and got into quarrels with notorious men. All these things served his purpose—if, indeed, I am right in supposing that he had any purpose at all. It is quite probable that, as before hinted, he acted only in accordance with his physical temperament; but, be this as it may, his personal greatly advanced, if it did not

altogether establish his literary fame. I have often carefully considered whether, without the *physique* of which I speak, there is that in the absolute *morale* of Mr. Willis which would have earned him reputation as a man of letters, and my conclusion is, that he could not have failed to become noted in *some* degree under almost any circumstances, but that about two-thirds (as above stated) of his appreciation by the public should be attributed to those *adventures* which grew immediately out of his animal constitution.

He received what is usually regarded as a "good education"—that is to say, he graduated at college; but his education, in the path he pursued, was worth to him, on account of his extraordinary *savoir faire*, fully twice as much as would have been its value in any common case. No man's knowledge is more available, no man has exhibited greater *tact* in the seemingly casual display of his wares. With *him*, at least, a little learning is *no* dangerous thing. He possessed at one time, I believe, the average quantum of American collegiate lore—"a little Latin and less Greek," a smattering of physical and metaphysical science, and (I should judge) a *very* little of the mathematics—but all this must be considered as mere *guess* on my part. Mr. Willis speaks French with some fluency, and Italian not quite so well.

Within the ordinary range of *belles lettres* authorship, he has evinced much versatility. If called on to designate him by any general literary title, I might term him a magazinist—for his compositions have invariably the species of *effect*, with the brevity which the magazine demands. We may view him as a paragraphist, an essayist, or rather "sketcher," a tale writer, and a poet.

In the first capacity he fails. His points, however

good when deliberately wrought, are too *recherchés* to be put hurriedly before the public eye. Mr. W. has by no means the *readiness* which the editing a newspaper demands. He composes (as did Addison, and as do many of the most brilliant and seemingly *dashing* writers of the present day,) with great labor and frequent erasure and interlineation. His MSS., in this regard, prese it a very singular appearance, and indicate the *vacillation* which is, perhaps, the leading trait of his naracter. A newspaper, too, in its longer articles—its "leaders"—very frequently demands argumentation, and here Mr. W. is remarkably out of his element. His exuberant *fancy* leads him over hedge and ditch—anywhere from the main road; and, besides, he is far too readily self-dispossessed. With time at command, however, his great *tact* stands him instead of all argumentative power, and enables him to overthrow an antagonist without permitting the latter to see how he is overthrown. A fine example of this "management" is to be found in Mr. W.'s reply to a very inconsiderate attack upon his social standing, made by one of the editors of the New York "Courier and Inquirer." I have always regarded this reply as the highest evidence of its author's ability, as a masterpiece of ingenuity, if not of absolute genius. The skill of the whole lay in this—that, without troubling himself to refute the charges themselves brought against him by Mr. Raymond, he put forth his strength in rendering them null, to all intents and purposes, by obliterating, incidentally and without letting his design be perceived, all *the impression* these charges were calculated to convey. But this reply can be called a newspaper article only on the ground of its having appeared in a newspaper.

As a writer of "sketches," properly so called, Mr.

Willis is unequalled. Sketches—especially of society—are his *forte*, and they are so for no other reason than that they afford him the best opportunity of introducing the personal Willis—or, more distinctly, because this species of composition is most susceptible of impression from his personal character. The *degagé* tone of this kind of writing, too, best admits and encourages that *fancy* which Mr. W. possesses in the most extraordinary degree; it is in fancy that he reigns supreme; this, more than any one other quality, and, indeed, more than all his other *literary* qualities combined, has made him what he is. It is this which gives him the originality, the freshness, the point, the piquancy, which appear to be the immediate, but which are, in fact, the mediate sources of his popularity.*

*As, by metaphysicians and in ordinary discourse, the word *fancy* is used with very little determinateness of meaning, I may be pardoned for repeating here what I have elsewhere said on this topic. I shall thus be saved much misapprehension in regard to the term—one which will necessarily be often employed in the course of this series.

"Fancy," says the author of "Aids to Reflection," (who aided reflection to much better purpose in his "Genevieve") —"fancy combines—imagination creates" This was intended and has been received as a distinction, but it is a distinction without a difference—without a difference even of degree. The fancy as nearly creates as the imagination, and neither at all. Novel conceptions are merely unusual combinations. The mind of man can imagine nothing which does not really exist; if it could, it would create not only ideally but substantially, as do the thoughts of God. It may be said, "We imagine a griffin, yet a griffin does not exist." Not the griffin, certainly, but its component parts. It is no more than a collation of known limbs, features, qualities. Thus with all which claims to be new, which appears to be a creation of the intellect—all is re-soluble into the old. The wildest effort of the mind cannot stand the test of this analysis.

Imagination, fancy, fantasy, and humor, have in common the elements combination and novelty. The imagination is the artist of the four. From novel arrangements of old forms which present themselves to it, it selects such only as are harmonious; the result, of course, is *beauty* itself—using the word in its most extended sense and as inclusive of the sublime. The pure imagination chooses, *from either beauty or deformity*,

In *tales* (written with deliberation for the magazines) he has shown greater *constructiveness* than I

only the most combinable things hitherto uncombined; the compound, as a general rule, partaking in character of sublimity or beauty in the ratio of the respective sublimity or beauty of the things combined, which are themselves still to be considered as atomic—that is to say, as previous combinations. But, as often analogously happens in physical chemistry, so not unfrequently does it occur in this chemistry of the intellect, that the admixture of two elements will result in a something that shall have nothing of the quality of one of them—or even nothing of the qualities of either. The range of imagination is thus unlimited. Its materials extend throughout the universe. Even out of deformities it fabricates that *beauty* which is at once its sole object and its inevitable test. But, in general, the richness of the matters combined, the facility of discovering combinable novelties worth combining, and *the absolute "chemical combination"* of the completed mass, are the particulars to be regarded in our estimate of imagination. It is this thorough harmony of an imaginative work which so often causes it to be undervalued by the undiscriminating, through the character of *obviousness* which is superinduced. We are apt to find ourselves asking *why it is that these combinations have never been imagined before?*

Now, when this question *does not occur*, when the harmony of the combination is comparatively neglected, and when, in addition to the element of novelty, there is introduced the sub-element of *unexpectedness*—when, for example, matters are brought into combination which not only have never been combined, but whose combination strikes us as a *difficulty happily overcome*, the result then appertains to the fancy, and is, to the majority of mankind, more grateful than the purely harmonious one—although, absolutely, it is less beautiful (or grand) for the reason that *it is* less harmonious.

Carrying its errors into excess—for, however enticing, they *are* errors still, or nature lies—fancy is at length found infringing upon the province of fantasy. The votaries of this latter delight not only in novelty and unexpectedness of combination, but in the *avoidance* of proportion. The result is, therefore, abnormal, and, to a healthy mind, affords less of pleasure through its novelty than of pain through its incoherence. When, proceeding a step farther, however, fancy seeks not merely disproportionate but incongruous or antagonistic elements, the effect is rendered more pleasurable by its greater positiveness, there is a merry effort of truth to shake from her that which is no property of hers, and we laugh outright in recognising humor.

The four faculties in question seem to me all of their class; but when either fancy or humor is expressed to gain an end, is pointed at a purpose—whenever either becomes objective in place of subjective, then it becomes, also, pure wit or sarcasm, just as the purpose is benevolent or malevolent.

should have given him credit for had I not read his compositions of this order—for in this faculty all his other works indicate a singular deficiency. The chief charm even of these tales, however, is still referable to *fancy*.

As a poet, Mr. Willis is not entitled, I think, to so high a rank as he may justly claim through his prose; and this for the reason that, although fancy is not inconsistent with any of the demands of those classes of prose composition which he has attempted, and, indeed, is a vital element of most of them, still it is at war (as will be understood from what I have said in the foot note) with that purity and perfection of *beauty* which are the soul of the poem proper. I wish to be understood as saying this *generally* of our author's poems. In some instances, seeming to *feel* the truth of my proposition, (that fancy should have no place in the loftier poesy,) he has denied it a place, as in "Melanie," and his Scriptural pieces; but, unfortunately, he has been unable to supply the void with the true imagination, and these poems consequently are deficient in vigor, in *stamen*. The Scriptural pieces are quite "correct," as the French have it, and are much admired by a certain set of readers, who judge of a poem, not by its effect on themselves, but by the effect which they imagine it *might* have upon themselves were they not unhappily soulless, and by the effect which they take it for granted it *does* have upon others. It cannot be denied, however, that these pieces are, in general tame, or indebted for what force they possess to the Scriptural passages of which they are merely paraphrastic. I quote what, in my own opinion, and in that of nearly all my friends, is really the truest poem ever written by Mr. Willis.

The shadows lay along Broadway,
'Twas near the twilight tide,
And slowly there a lady fair
Was walking in her pride—
Alone walked she, yet viewlessly
Walked spirits at her side.

Peace charmed the street beneath her feet
And honor charmed the air,
And all astir looked kind on her
And called her good as fair—
For all God ever gave to her
She kept with chary care.

She kept with care her beauties rare
From lovers warm and true,
For her heart was cold to all but gold,
And the rich came not to woo.
Ah, honored well are charms to sell
When priests the selling do!

Now, walking there was one more fair—
A slight girl, lily-pale,
And she had unseen company
To make the spirit quail—
'Twixt want and scorn she walked forlorn,
And nothing could avail.

No mercy now can clear her brow
For this world's peace to pray—
For, as love's wild prayer dissolved in air,
Her woman's heart gave way;
And the sin forgiven by Christ in heaven
By man is cursed alway.

There is about this little poem (evidently written in haste and through impulse) a true *imagination*. Its grace, dignity and pathos are impressive, and there is more in it of earnestness, of soul, than in anything I have seen from the pen of its author. His compositions, in general, have a taint of worldliness, of insincerity. The identical rhyme in the last

stanza is very noticeable, and the whole *finale* is feeble. It would be improved by making the last two lines precede the first two of the stanza.

In classifying Mr. W.'s writings I did not think it worth while to speak of him as a dramatist, because, although he has written plays, what they have of merit is altogether in their character of poem. Of his "Bianca Visconti" I have little to say;—it deserved to fail, and did, although it abounded in *eloquent* passages. "Tortesa" abounded in the same, but had a great many dramatic *points* well calculated to tell with a conventional audience. Its characters, with the exception of Tomaso, a drunken buffoon, had no character at all, and the *plot* was a tissue of absurdities, inconsequences and inconsistencies; yet I cannot help thinking it, upon the whole, the best play ever written by an American.

Mr. Willis has made very few attempts at criticism, and those few (chiefly newspaper articles) have not impressed me with a high idea of his analytic abilities, although with a *very* high idea of his taste and discrimination.

His *style* proper may be called extravagant, *bizarre*, pointed, epigrammatic without being antithetical, (this is very rarely the case,) but, through all its whimsicalities, graceful, classic and *accurate*. He is very seldom to be caught tripping in the minor morals. His English is *correct;* his most outrageous imagery is, at all events, unmixed.

Mr. Willis's career has naturally made him enemies among the envious host of dunces whom he has outstripped in the race for fame; and these his personal manner (a little tinctured with reserve, *brusquerie*, or even haughtiness) is by no means adapted to conciliate. He has innumerable warm friends, however, and is himself a warm friend. He

is impulsive, generous, bold, impetuous, vacillating, irregularly energetic—apt to be hurried into error, but incapable of deliberate wrong.

He is yet young, and, without being handsome, in the ordinary sense, is a remarkably well looking man. In height he is, perhaps, five feet eleven, and justly proportioned. His figure is put in the best light by the ease and assured grace of his carriage. His whole person and personal demeanor bear about them the traces of "good society." His face is somewhat too full, or rather heavy, in its lower portions. Neither his nose nor his forehead can be defended; the latter would puzzle phrenology. His eyes are a dull bluish gray, and small. His hair is of a rich brown, curling naturally and luxuriantly. His mouth is well cut; the teeth fine; the expression of the smile intellectual and winning. He converses little, *well* rather than fluently, and in a subdued tone. The portrait of him published about three years ago in "Graham's Magazine," conveys by no means so true an idea of the man as does the sketch (by Lawrence) inserted as frontispiece to a late collection of his poems.

WILLIAM M. GILLESPIE

MR. WILLIAM M. GILLESPIE aided Mr. Park Benjamin, I believe, some years ago, in the editorial conduct of "The New World," and has been otherwise connected with the periodical press of New York. He is more favorably known, however, as the author of a neat volume entitled "Rome as Seen by a New Yorker,"—a good title to a good book. The endeavor to convey Rome only by those impressions which would naturally be made upon an American, gives the work a certain air of originality—the rarest of all qualities in descriptions of the Eternal City. The style is pure and sparkling, although occasionally flippant and *dilletantesque*. The love of remark is much in the usual way—*selom les règles*—never very exceptionable, and never very profound.

Mr. Gillespie is not unaccomplished, converses readily on many topics, has some knowledge of Italian, French, and, I believe, of the classical tongues, with such proficiency in the mathematics as has obtained for him a professorship of civil engineering at Union College, Schenectady.

In character he has much general amiability, is warm-hearted, excitable, nervous. His address is somewhat awkward, but "insinuating" from its warmth and vivacity. Speaks continuously and rapidly, with a lisp which, at times, is by no means unpleasing; is fidgety, and never knows how to sit or to stand, or what to do with his hands and feet or his hat. In the street walks irregularly, mutters to

himself, and, in general, appears in a state of profound abstraction.

In person he is about five feet seven inches high, neither stout nor thin, angularly proportioned; eyes large and dark hazel, hair dark and curling, an ill-formed nose, fine teeth, and a smile of peculiar sweetness; nothing remarkable about the forehead. The general expression of the countenance when in repose is rather unprepossessing, but animation very much alters its character. He is probably thirty years of age—unmarried.

CHARLES F. BRIGGS

MR. BRIGGS is better known as Harry Franco, *a nom de plume* assumed since the publication, in the "Knickerbocker Magazine," of his series of papers called "Adventures of Harry Franco." He also wrote for "The Knickerbocker" some articles entitled "The Haunted Merchant," which have been printed since as a novel, and from time to time subsequently has been a contributor to that journal. The two productions just mentioned have some merit. They depend for their effect upon the relation in a straightforward manner, just as one would talk, of the most commonplace events—a kind of writing which, to ordinary, and especially to indolent intellects, has a very observable charm. To cultivated or to active minds it is in an equal degree distasteful, even when claiming the merit of originality. Mr. Briggs's manner, however, is an obvious imitation of Smollett, and, as usual with all imitation, produces an unfavorable impression upon those conversant with the original. It is a common failing, also, with imitators, to out-Herod Herod in aping the peculiarities of the model, and too frequently the faults are more pertinaciously exaggerated than the merits. Thus, the author of "Harry Franco" carries the simplicity of Smollett sometimes to insipidity, and his picturesque low-life is made to degenerate into sheer vulgarity.

If Mr. Briggs has a *forte*, it is a Flemish fidelity that omits nothing, whether agreeable or disagreeable; but I cannot call this *forte* a virtue. He has

also some humor, but nothing of an original character. Occasionally he has written good things. A magazine article, called "Dobbs and his Cantelope," was quite easy and clever in its way; but the way is necessarily a small one. And I ought not to pass over without some allusion to it, his satirical novel of "Tom Pepper." As a novel, it really has not the slightest pretensions. To a genuine artist in literature, he is as Plumbe to Sully. Plumbe's daguerreotypes have more fidelity than any portrait ever put on canvas, and so Briggs's sketches of E. A. Duyckinck (Tibbings) and the author of Puffer Hopkins (Ferocious) are as lifelike as any portraits in words that have ever been drawn. But the subjects are little and mean, pretending and vulgar. Mr. Briggs would not succeed in delineating a gentleman. And some letters of his in Hiram Fuller's paper—perhaps for the reason that they run through a desert of stupidity—some letters of his, I say, under the apt signature of "Ferdinand Mendoza Pinto," are decidedly clever as examples of caricature—absurd, of course, but sharply absurd, so that, with a knowledge of their design, one could hardly avoid occasional laughter. I once thought Mr.Briggs could cause laughter only by his efforts at a serious kind of writing.

In connexion with Mr. John Bisco, he was the originator of the late "Broadway Journal"—my editorial association with that work not having commenced until the sixth or seventh number, although I wrote for it occasionally from the first. Among the principal papers contributed by Mr. B., were those discussing the paintings at the preceding exhibition of the Academy of Fine Arts in New York. I may be permitted to say, that there was scarcely a point in his whole series of criticisms on this sub-

ject at which I did not radically disagree with him. Whatever taste he has in art is, like his taste in letters, Flemish. There is a portrait painter for whom he has an unlimited admiration. The unfortunate gentleman is Mr. Page.

Mr. Briggs is about five feet six inches in height, somewhat slightly framed, with a sharp, thin face, narrow forehead, nose sufficiently prominent, mouth rather pleasant in expression, eyes not so good, gray and small, although occasionally brilliant. In dress he is apt to affect the artist, felicitating himself especially upon his personal acquaintance with artists and his general connoisseurship. He walks with a quick, nervous step. His address is quite good, frank and insinuating. His conversation has now and then the merit of humor, and more frequently of a smartness, allied to wit, but he has a perfect mania for contradiction, and it is sometimes impossible to utter an uninterrupted sentence in his hearing. He has much warmth of feeling, and is not a person to be disliked, although very apt to irritate and annoy. Two of his most marked characteristics are vacillation of purpose and a passion for being mysterious. He has, apparently, travelled; has some knowledge of French; has been engaged in a variety of employments; and now, I believe, occupies a lawyer's office in Nassau-street. He is from Cape Cod or Nantucket, is married, and is the centre of a little circle of rather intellectual people, of which the Kirklands, Lowell, and some other notabilities are honorary members. He goes little into general society, and seems about forty years of age.

WILLIAM KIRKLAND

MR. WILLIAM KIRKLAND—husband of the author of "A New Home"—has written much for the magazines, but has made no collection of his works. A series of "Letters from Abroad" have been among his most popular compositions. He was in Europe for some time, and is well acquainted with the French language and literature, as also with the German. He aided Dr. Turner in the late translation of Von Raumer's "America," published by the Langleys. One of his best magazine papers appeared in "The Columbian" —a review of the London Foreign Quarterly for April, 1844. The arrogance, ignorance, and self-glorification of the Quarterly, with its gross injustice towards everything un-British, were severely and palpably exposed, and its narrow malignity shown to be especially *mal-à-propos* in a journal exclusively devoted to foreign concerns, and therefore presumably imbued with something of a cosmopolitan spirit. An article on "English and American Monthlies" in Godey's Magazine, and one entitled "Our English Visitors," in "The Columbian," have also been extensively read and admired. A valuable essay on "The Tyranny of Public Opinion in the United States," (published in "The Columbian" for December, 1845), demonstrates the truth of Jefferson's assertion, that in this country, which has set the world an example of physical liberty, the inquisition of popular sentiment overrules in practice the freedom asserted in theory by the laws. "The

West, the Paradise of the Poor," and "The United States' Census for 1830," the former in "The Democratic Review," the latter in "Hunt's Merchants' Magazine," with sundry essays in the daily papers, complete the list of Mr. Kirkland's works. It will be seen that he has written little, but that little is entitled to respect for its simplicity, and the evidence which it affords of scholarship and diligent research. Whatever Mr. Kirkland does is done carefully. He is occasionally very caustic, but seldom without cause. His style is vigorous, precise, and, notwithstanding his foreign acquirements, free from idiomatic peculiarities.

Mr. Kirkland is beloved by all who know him; in character mild, unassuming, benevolent, yet not without becoming energy at times; in person rather short and slight; features indistinctive; converses well and zealously, although his hearing is defective.

JOHN W. FRANCIS

DOCTOR FRANCIS although by no means a *litterateur*, cannot well be omitted in an account of the New York *literati*. In his capacity of physician and medical lecturer, he is far too well known to need comment. He was the pupil, friend and partner of Hossack—the pupil of Abernethy—connected in some manner with everything that has been well said or done medicinally in America. As a medical essayist he has always commanded the highest respect and attention. Among the *points* he has made at various times, I may mention his Anatomy of Drunkenness, his views of the Asiatic Cholera, his analysis of the Avon waters of the state, his establishment of the comparative immunity of the constitution from a second attack of yellow fever, and his pathological propositions on the charges wrought in the system by specific poisons through their assimilation—propositions remarkably sustained and enforced by recent discoveries of Liebig.

In unprofessional letters Doctor Francis has also accomplished much, although necessarily in a discursive manner. His biography of Chancellor Livingston, his Horticultural Discourse, his Discourse at the opening of the new hall of the New York Lyceum of Natural History, are (each in its way) models of fine writing just sufficiently toned down by an indomitable common sense. I had nearly forgotten to mention his admirable sketch of the personal associations of Bishop Berkley, of Newport.

Doctor Francis is one of the old spirits of the New York Historical Society. His philanthropy, his active, untiring beneficence, will for ever render his name a household word among the truly Christian of heart. His professional services and his purse are always at the command of the needy; few of our wealthiest men have ever contributed to the relief of distress so bountifully—none certainly with greater readiness or with warmer sympathy.

His person and manner are richly peculiar. He is short and stout, probably five feet eight in height, limbs of great muscularity and strength, the whole frame indicating prodigious vitality and energy—the latter is, in fact, the leading trait in his character. His head is large, massive—the features in keeping; complexion dark florid; eyes piercingly bright; mouth exceedingly mobile and expressive; hair gray, and worn in matted locks about the neck and shoulders—eyebrows to correspond, jagged and ponderous. His age is about fifty-eight. His general appearance is such as to arrest attention.

His address is the most genial that can be conceived, its *bonhommie* irresistible. He speaks in a loud, clear, hearty tone, dogmatically, with his head thrown back and his chest out; never waits for an introduction to anybody; slaps a perfect stranger on the back and calls him "Doctor" or "Learned Theban"; pats every lady on the head, and (if she be pretty and *petite*) designates her by some such title as "My Pocket Edition of the Lives of the Saints." His conversation proper is a sort of Roman punch made up of tragedy, comedy, and the broadest of all possible farce. He has a natural, felicitous flow of talk, always overswelling its boundaries and sweeping everything before it right and left. He is very earnest, intense, emphatic; thumps

the table with his fist; shocks the nerves of the ladies. His *forte*, after all, is humor, the richest conceivable—a compound of Swift, Rabelais, and the clown in the pantomime. He is married.

ANNA CORA MOWATT

MRS. MOWATT is in some respects a remarkable woman, and has undoubtedly wrought a deeper impression upon *the public* than any one of her sex in America.

She became first known through her recitations. To these she drew large and discriminating audiences in Boston, New York, and elsewhere to the north and east. Her subjects were much in the usual way of these exhibitions, including comic as well as serious pieces, chiefly in verse. In her selections she evinced no *very* refined taste, but was probably influenced by the elocutionary rather than by the literary value of her *programmes*. She read well; her voice was melodious; her youth and general appearance excited interest, but, upon the whole, she produced no great effect, and the enterprise may be termed unsuccessful, although the press, as is its wont, spoke in the most sonorous tone of her success.

It was during these recitations that her name, prefixed to occasional tales, sketches and brief poems in the magazines, first attracted an attention that, but for the recitations, it might not have attracted.

Her sketches and tales may be said to be *cleverly* written. They are lively, easy, *conventional*, scintillating with a species of sarcastic wit, which might be termed good were it in any respect original. In point of style—that is to say, of mere English, they are very respectable. One of the best of her prose papers is entitled "Ennui and its Antidote," published in "The Columbian Magazine" for June,

1845. The subject, however, is an exceedingly hackneyed one.

In looking carefully over her poems, I find no one entitled to commendation as a whole; in very few of them do I observe even noticeable passages, and I confess that I am surprised and disappointed at this result of my inquiry; nor can I make up my mind that there is not much latent poetical power in Mrs. Mowatt. From some lines addressed to Isabel M——, I copy the opening stanza as the most favorable specimen which I have seen of her verse.

> Forever vanished from thy cheek
> Is life's unfolding rose—
> Forever quenched the flashing smile
> That conscious beauty knows!
> Thine orbs are lustrous with a light
> Which ne'er illumes the eye
> Till heaven is bursting on the sight
> And earth is fleeting by.

In this there is much force, and the idea in the concluding quatrain is so well *put* as to have the air of originality. Indeed, I am not sure that the thought of the last two lines is not original;—at all events it is exceedingly *natural* and impressive. I say "*natural*," because, in any imagined ascent from the orb we inhabit, when heaven should "burst on the sight"—in other words, when the attraction of the planet should be superseded by that of another sphere, then instantly would the "earth" have the appearance of "fleeting by." The versification, also, is much better here than is usual with the poetess. In general she is rough, through excess of harsh consonants. The whole poem is of higher merit than any which I can find with her name attached; but there is little of the spirit of poesy in anything she writes. She evinces more feeling than ideality.

Her first decided success was with her comedy, "Fashion," although much of this success itself is referable to the interest felt in her as a beautiful woman and an authoress.

The play is not without merit. It may be commended especially for its simplicity of plot. What the Spanish playwrights mean by dramas of *intrigue*, are the worst acting dramas in the world; the intellect of an audience can never safely be fatigued by complexity. The necessity for verbose explanation, however, on the part of Trueman, at the close of the play, is in this regard a serious defect. A *dénouement* should in all cases be taken up with *action*—with nothing else. Whatever cannot be explained by such action should be communicated at the opening of the story.

In the plot, however estimable for simplicity, there is of course not a particle of originality of invention. Had it, indeed, been designed as a burlesque upon the arrant conventionality of stage incidents in general, it might have been received as a palpable hit. There is not an event, a character, a jest, which is not a well-understood thing, a matter of course, a stage-property time out of mind. The general tone is adopted from "The School for Scandal," to which, indeed, the whole composition bears just such an affinity as the shell of a locust to the locust that tenants it—as the spectrum of a Congreve rocket to the Congreve rocket itself. In the *management* of her imitation, nevertheless, Mrs. Mowatt has, I think, evinced a sense of theatrical effect or point which may lead her, at no very distant day, to compose an exceedingly *taking*, although it can never much aid her in composing a very meritorious drama. "Fashion," in a word, owes what it had of success to its being the work of a lovely woman who

had already excited interest, and to the very commonplaceness or spirit of conventionality which rendered it readily comprehensible and appreciable by the public proper. It was much indebted, too, to the carpets, the ottomans, the chandeliers and the conservatories, which gained so decided a popularity for that despicable mass of inanity, the "London Assurance" of Bourcicault.

Since "Fashion," Mrs. Mowatt has published one or two brief novels in pamphlet form, but they have no particular merit, although they afford glimpses (I cannot help thinking) of a genius as yet unrevealed, except in her capacity of actress.

In this capacity, if she be but true to herself, she will assuredly win a very enviable distinction. She has done well, wonderfully well, both in tragedy and comedy; but if she knew her own strength, she would confine herself nearly altogether to the depicting (in letters not less than on the stage) the more gentle sentiments and the most profound passions. Her sympathy with the latter is evidently intense. In the utterance of the truly generous, of the really noble, of the unaffectedly passionate, we see her bosom heave, her cheek grow pale, her limbs tremble, her lip quiver, and nature's own tear rush impetuously to the eye. It is this freshness of the heart which will provide for her the greenest laurels. It is this enthusiasm, this well of deep feeling, which should be made to prove for her an inexhaustible source of fame. As an actress, it is to her a mine of wealth worth all the dawdling *instruction* in the world. Mrs. Mowatt, on her first appearance as Pauline, was quite as able to give lessons in stage *routine* to any actor or actress in America, as was any actor or actress to give lessons to her. *Now*, at least, she should throw all "support" to the winds,

trust proudly to her own sense of art, her own rich and natural elocution, her beauty, which is unusual, her grace, which is queenly, and be assured that these qualities, as she *now* possesses them, are all sufficient to render her a great actress, when considered simply as the means by which the end of natural acting is to be attained, as the mere instruments by which she may effectively and unimpededly lay bare to the audience the movements of her own passionate heart.

Indeed, the great charm of her manner is its naturalness. She looks, speaks, and moves, with a well-controlled impulsiveness, as different as can be conceived from the custumary rant and cant, the hack conventionality of the stage. Her voice is rich and voluminous, and although by no means powerful, is so well managed as to seem so. Her utterance is singularly distinct, its sole blemish being an occasional Anglicism of accent, adopted probably from her instructor, Mr. Crisp. Her reading could scarcely be improved. Her action is distinguished by an ease and self-possession which would do credit to a veteran. Her step is the perfection of grace. Often have I watched her for hours with the closest scrutiny, yet never for an instant did I observe her in an attitude of the least awkwardness or even constraint, while many of her seemingly impulsive gestures spoke in loud terms of the woman of genius, of the poet imbued with the profoundest sentiment of the beautiful in motion.

Her figure is slight, even fragile. Her face is a remarkably fine one, and of that precise character best adapted to the stage. The forehead is, perhaps, the least prepossessing feature, although it is by no means an unintellectual one. Hair light auburn, in rich profusion, and always arranged with exquisite taste. The eyes are gray, brilliant and ex-

pressive, without being full. The nose is well formed, with the Roman curve, and indicative of energy. This quality is also shown in the somewhat excessive prominence of the chin. The mouth is large, with brilliant and even teeth and flexible lips, capable of the most instantaneous and effective variations of expression. A more radiantly beautiful smile it is quite impossible to conceive.

GEORGE B. CHEEVER

THE REVEREND GEORGE B. CHEEVER created at one time something of an excitement by the publication of a little *brochure* entitled "Deacon Giles' Distillery." He is much better known, however, as the editor of "The Commonplace Book of American Poetry," a work which has at least the merit of not belying its title, and *is* exceedingly commonplace. I am ashamed to say that for several years this compilation afforded to Europeans the only material from which it was possible to form an estimate of the poetical ability of Americans. The selections appear to me exceedingly injudicious, and have all a marked leaning to the didactic. Dr. Cheever is not without a certain sort of negative ability as critic, but works of this character should be undertaken by poets or not at all. The verses which I have seen attributed to *him* are undeniably *médiocres*.

His principal publications, in addition to those mentioned above, are "God's Hand in America," "Wanderings of a Pilgrim under the Shadow of Mont Blanc," "Wanderings of a Pilgrim under the Shadow of Jungfrau," and, lately, a "Defence of Capital Punishment." This "Defence" is at many points well reasoned, and as a clear *resumé* of all that has been already said on its own side of the question, may be considered as commendable. Its premises, however, (as well as those of all reasoners *pro* or *con* on this vexed topic), are admitted only very partially by the world at large—a fact of which

the author affects to be ignorant. Neither does he make the slightest attempt at bringing forward one novel argument. Any man of ordinary invention might have adduced and maintained a dozen.

The two series of "Wanderings" are, perhaps, the best works of their writer. They are what is called "eloquent"; a little too much in that way, perhaps, but nevertheless entertaining.

Dr. Cheever is rather small in stature, and his countenance is vivacious; in other respects, there is nothing very observable about his personal appearance. He has been recently married.

CHARLES ANTHON

DOCTOR CHARLES ANTHON is the well-known Jay-Professor of the Greek and Latin languages in Columbia College, New York and Rector of the Grammar School. If not absolutely the best he is at least generally considered the best classicist in America. In England, and in Europe at large, his scholastic acquirements are more sincerely respected than those of any of our countrymen. His additions to Lemprière are there justly regarded as evincing a nice perception of method, and accurate as well as extensive erudition, but his "Classical Dictionary" has superseded the work of the Frenchman altogether. Most of Professor Anthon's publications have been adopted as text-books at Oxford and Cambridge—an honor to be properly understood only by those acquainted with the many high requisites for attaining it. As a commentator (if not exactly as a critic) he may rank with any of his day, and has evinced powers very unusual in men who devote their lives to classical lore. His accuracy is very remarkable; in this particular he is always to be relied upon. The trait manifests itself even in his MS., which is a model of neatness and symmetry, exceeding in these respects anything of the kind with which I am acquainted. It is somewhat *too* neat, perhaps, and *too* regular, as well as diminutive, to be called beautiful; it might be mistaken at any time, however, for very elaborate copperplate engraving.

But his chirography, although fully in keeping,

so far as precision is concerned, with his mental character, is, in its entire freedom from flourish or superfluity, as much *out* of keeping with his verbal style. In his notes to the Classics he is singularly Ciceronian—if, indeed, not positively Johnsonese.

An attempt was made not long ago to prepossess the public against his "Classical Dictionary," the most important of his works, by getting up a hue and cry of plagiarism—in the case of all similar books the most preposterous accusation in the world, although, from its very preposterousness, one not easily rebutted. Obviously, the design in any such compilation is, in the first place, to make a *useful school-book* or book of reference, and the scholar who should be weak enough to neglect this indispensable point for the mere purpose of winning credit with a few bookish men for originality, would deserve to be dubbed, by the public at least, a dunce. There are very few points of classical scholarship which are not the common property of "the learned" throughout the world, and in composing any book of reference recourse is unscrupulously and even necessarily had in all cases to similar books which have preceded. In availing themselves of these latter, however, it is the practice of quacks to paraphrase page after page, rearranging the order of paragraphs, making a slight alteration in point of fact here and there, but preserving the spirit of the whole, its information, erudition, etc., etc., while everything is so completely *re-written* as to leave no room for a direct charge of plagiarism; and this is considered and lauded as originality. Now, he who, in availing himself of the labors of his predecessors (and it is clear that all scholars *must* avail themselves of such labors)—he who shall copy *verbatim* the passages to be desired, without attempt at palming off their spirit as

original with himself, is certainly no plagiarist, even if he fail to make *direct* acknowledgment of indebtedness—is unquestionably *less* of the plagiarist than the disingenuous and contemptible quack who wriggles himself, as above explained, into a reputation for originality, a reputation quite out of place in a case of this kind—the public, of course, never caring a straw whether he be original or not. These attacks upon the New York professor are to be attributed to a *clique* of pedants in and about Boston, gentlemen envious of his success, and whose own complications are noticeable only for the singular patience and ingenuity with which their dovetailing to chicanery is concealed from the *public* eye.

Doctor Anthon is, perhaps, forty-eight years of age; about five feet eight inches in height; rather stout; fair complexion; hair light and inclined to curl; forehead remarkably broad and high; eye gray, clear and penetrating; mouth well-formed, with excellent teeth—the lips having great flexibility, and consequent power of expression; the smile particularly pleasing. His address in general is bold, frank, cordial, full of *bonhommie*. His whole air is *distingué* in the best understanding of the term—that is to say, he would impress any one at first sight with the idea of his being no ordinary man. He has qualities, indeed, which would have insured him eminent success in almost any pursuit; and there are times in which his friends are half disposed to regret his exclusive devotion to classical literature. He was one of the originators of the late "New York Review," his associates in the conduct and proprietorship being Doctor F. L. Hawks and Professor R. C. Henry. By far the most valuable papers, however, were those of Doctor A.

RALPH HOYT

THE REVEREND RALPH HOYT is known chiefly—at least to the world of letters—by "The Chaunt of Life and other Poems, with Sketches and Essays." The publication of this work, however, was never *completed*, only a portion of the poems having appeared, and none of the essays or sketches. It is hoped that we shall yet have these latter.

Of the poems issued, one, entitled "Old," had so many peculiar excellences that I copied the whole of it, although quite long, in "The Broadway Journal." It will remind every reader of Durand's fine picture, "An Old Man's Recollections," although between poem and painting there is no more than a very admissible similarity.

I quote a stanza from "Old" (the opening one) by way of bringing the piece to the remembrance of any who may have forgotten it.

> By the wayside, on a mossy stone,
> Sat a hoary pilgrim sadly musing;
> Oft I marked him sitting there alone,
> All the landscape like a page perusing;
> Poor unknown,
> By the way side on a mossy stone.

The quaintness aimed at here is, so far as a single stanza is concerned, to be defended as a legitimate effect, conferring high pleasure on a numerous and cultivated class of minds. Mr. Hoyt, however, in his continuous and uniform repetition of the first line in the last of each stanza of twenty-five, has by much exceeded the proper limits of the quaint and

impinged upon the ludicrous. The poem, nevertheless, abounds in lofty merit, and has, in especial, some passages of rich imagination and exquisite pathos. For example—

Seemed it pitiful he should sit there,
No one sympathizing, no one heeding,
None to love him for his thin gray hair.

One sweet spirit broke the silent spell—
Ah, to me her name was always Heaven!
She besought him all his grief to tell—
(I was then thirteen and she eleven)
Isabel!
One sweet spirit broke the silent spell.

"Angel," said he, sadly, "I am old;
Earthly hope no longer hath a morrow:
Why I sit here thou shalt soon be told"—
(Then his eye betrayed a pearl of sorrow—
Down it rolled—)
"Angel," said he, sadly, "*I am old!*"

It must be confessed that some portions of "Old" (which is by far the best of the collection) remind us forcibly of the "Old Man" of Oliver Wendell Holmes.

"Pröemus" is the concluding poem of the volume, and itself concludes with an exceedingly vigorous stanza, putting me not a little in mind of Campbell in his best days.

"O'er all the silent sky
A dark and scowling frown—
But darker scowled each eye
When all resolved to die—
When (night of dread renown!)
A thousand stars went down."

Mr. Hoyt is about forty years of age, of the medium height, pale complexion, dark hair and eyes. His countenance expresses sensibility and benevolence. He converses slowly and with perfect deliberation. He is married.

GULIAN C. VERPLANCK

MR. VERPLANCK has acquired reputation—at least his literary reputation—less from what he has done than from what he has given indication of ability to do. His best if not his principal works, have been addresses, orations and contributions to the reviews. His scholarship is more than respectable, and his taste and acumen are not to be disputed.

His legal acquirements, it is admitted, are very considerable. When in Congress he was noted as the most industrious man in that assembly, and acted as a walking register or volume of reference, ever at the service of that class of legislators who are too lofty-minded to burden their memories with mere business particulars or matters of fact. Of late years the energy of his character appears to have abated, and many of his friends go so far as to accuse him of indolence.

His family is quite influential—one of the few old Dutch ones retaining their social position.

Mr. Verplanck is short in stature, not more than five feet five inches in height, and compactly or stoutly built. The head is square, massive, and covered with thick, bushy and grizzly hair; the cheeks are ruddy; lips red and full, indicating a relish for good cheer; nose short and straight; eyebrows much arched; eyes dark blue, with what seems, to a casual glance, a sleepy expression—but they gather light and fire as we examine them.

He must be sixty, but a vigorous constitution gives

promise of a ripe and healthful old age. He is active; walks firmly, with a short, quick step. His manner is affable, or (more accurately) sociable. He converses well, although with no great fluency, and has his hobbies of talk; is especially fond of old English literature. Altogether, his person, intellect, tastes and general peculiarities, bear a very striking resemblance to those of the late Nicholas Biddle.

FREEMAN HUNT

MR. HUNT is the editor and proprietor of the well-known "Merchants' Magazine," one of the most useful of our monthly journals, and decidedly the best "property" of any work of its class. In its establishment he evinced many remarkable traits of character. He was entirely without means, and even much in debt, and otherwise embarrassed, when by one of those intuitive perceptions which belong only to genius, but which are usually attributed to "good luck," the "happy" idea entered his head of getting up a magazine devoted to the interests of the influential class of merchants. The chief happiness of this idea, however, (which no doubt had been entertained and discarded by a hundred projectors before Mr. H.,) consisted in the method by which he proposed to carry it into operation. Neglecting the hackneyed modes of advertising largely, circulating flashy prospectuses and sending out numerous "agents," who in general, merely serve the purpose of boring people into a very temporary support of the work in whose behalf they are employed, he took the whole matter resolutely into his own hands; called personally, in the first place, upon his immediate mercantile friends; explained to them, frankly and succinctly, his object; put the value and necessity of the contemplated publication in the best light—as he well knew how to do—and in this manner obtained to head his subscription list a good many of the most eminent business men in New York. Armed with their names and with

recommendatory letters from many of them, he now pushed on to the other chief cities of the Union, and thus, in less time than is taken by ordinary men to make a preparatory flourish of trumpets, succeeded in building up for himself a permanent fortune and for the public a journal of immense interest and value. In the whole proceeding he evinced a tact, a knowledge of mankind and a self-dependence which are the staple of even greater achievements than the establishment of a five dollar magazine. In the subsequent conduct of the work he gave evidence of equal ability. Having without aid put the magazine upon a satisfactory footing as regards its circulation, he also without aid undertook its editorial and business conduct—from the first germ of the conception to the present moment having kept the whole undertaking within his own hands. His subscribers and regular contributors are now among the most intelligent and influential in America; the journal is regarded as absolute authority in mercantile matters, circulates extensively not only in this country but in Europe, and even in regions more remote, affording its worthy and enterprising projector a large income, which no one knows better than himself how to put to good use.

The strong points, the marked peculiarities of Mr. Hunt could not have failed in arresting the attention of all observers of character; and Mr. Willis in especial has made him the subject of repeated comment. I copy what follows from the "New York Mirror":

Hunt has been glorified in the "Hong-Kong Gazette," is regularly complimented by the English mercantile authorities, has every bank in the world for an eager subscriber, every consul, every ship-owner and navigator; is filed away as authority in every library, and thought of in half the countries of the world as early as No. 3 in their enumeration of distinguished Americans, yet who seeks

to do him honor in the city he does honor to? The "Merchants' Magazine," though a prodigy of perseverance and industry, is not an accidental development of Hunt's energies. He has always been singularly sagacious and original in devising new works and good ones. He was the founder of the first "Ladies' Magazine,"* of the first children's periodical; he started the "American Magazine of Useful and Entertaining Knowledge," compiled the best known collection of American anecdotes and is an indefatigable writer—the author, among other things of "Letters About the Hudson."

Hunt was a playfellow of ours in round-jacket days, and we have always looked at him with a reminiscent interest. His luminous, eager eyes, as he goes along the street, keenly bent on his errand, would impress any observer with an idea of his genius and determination, and we think it quite time his earnest head was in the engraver's hand and his daily passing by a mark for the *digito monstrari*. Few more worthy or more valuable citizens are among us.

Much of Mr. Hunt's character is included in what I have already said and quoted. He is "earnest," "eager," combining in a very singular manner general coolness and occasional excitability. He is a true friend, and the enemy of no man. His heart is full of the warmest sympathies and charities. No one in New York is more universally popular.

He is about five feet eight inches in height, well proportioned; complexion dark-florid; forehead capacious; chin massive and projecting, indicative (according to Lavater and general experience) of that energy which is, in fact, the chief point of his character; hair light brown, very fine, of a weblike texture, worn long and floating about the face; eyes of wonderful brilliancy and intensity of expression; the whole countenance beaming with sensibility and intelligence. He is married, and about thirty-eight years of age.

*At this point Mr. Willis is, perhaps, in error.

PIERO MARONCELLI

DURING his twelve years' imprisonment, *Maroncelli* composed a number of poetical works, some of which were committed to paper, others lost for the want of it. In this country he has published a volume entitled "Additions of the Memoirs of Silvio Pellico," containing numerous anecdotes of the captivity not recorded in Pellico's work, and an "Essay on the Classic and Romantic Schools," the author proposing to divide them anew and designate them by novel distinctions. There is at least some scholarship and some originality in this essay. It is also brief. Maroncelli regards it as the best of his compositions. It is strongly tinctured with transcendentalism. The volume contains, likewise, some poems, of which the "Psalm of Life," and the "Psalm of the Dawn" have never been translated into English. "Winds of the Wakened Spring," one of the pieces included, has been happily rendered by Mr. Halleck, and is the most favorable specimen that could have been selected. These "Additions" accompanied a Boston version of "My Prisons, by Silvio Pellico."

Maroncelli is now about fifty years old, and bears on his person the marks of long suffering; he has lost a leg; his hair and beard became gray many years ago; just now he is suffering from severe illness, and from this it can scarcely be expected that he will recover.

In figure he is short and slight. His forehead is rather low, but broad. His eyes are light blue and

weak. The nose and mouth are large. His features in general have all the Italian mobility; their expression is animated and full of intelligence. He speaks hurriedly and gesticulates to excess. He is irritable, frank, generous, chivalrous, warmly attached to his friends, and expecting from them equal devotion. His love of country is unbounded, and he is quite enthusiastic in his endeavors to circulate in America the literature of Italy.

LAUGHTON OSBORN

PERSONALLY, Mr. Osborn is little known as an author, either to the public or in literary society, but he has made a great many "sensations" anonymously, or with a *nom de plume*. I am not sure that he has published anything with his own name.

One of his earliest works—if not his earliest—was "The Adventures of Jeremy Levis, by Himself," in one volume, a kind of medley of fact, fiction, satire, criticism, and novel philosophy. It is a dashing, reckless *brochure*, brimful of talent and audacity. Of course it was covertly admired by the few, and loudly condemned by all of the many who can fairly be said to have seen it at all. It had no great circulation. There was something wrong, I fancy, in the mode of its issue.

"Jeremy Levis" was followed by "The Dream of Alla-Ad-Deen, from the romance of 'Anastasia,' by Charles Erskine White, D. D." This is a thin pamphlet of thirty-two pages, each page containing about a hundred and forty words. Alla-Ad-Deen is the son of Aladin, of "wonderful lamp" memory, and the story is in the "Vision of Mirza," or "Rasselas" way. The design is to reconcile us to death and evil, on the somewhat unphilosophical ground that comparatively we are of little importance in the scale of creation. The author himself supposes this scale to be infinite, and thus his argument proves too much; for if evil should be regarded by man as of no consequence because, "comparatively," *he* is of

none, it must be regarded as of no consequence by the angels for a similar reason—and so on in an ever-ending ascent. In other words, the only thing proved is the rather bullish proposition that evil is no evil at all. I do not find that the "Dream" elicited any attention. It would have been more appropriately published in one of our magazines.

Next in order came, I believe, "The Confessions of a Poet, by Himself." This was in two volumes, of the ordinary novel form, but printed very openly. It made much noise in the literary world, and no little curiosity was excited in regard to its author, who was generally supposed to be John Neal. There were some grounds for this supposition, the tone and matter of the narrative bearing much resemblance to those of "Errata" and "Seventy-Six," especially in the points of boldness and vigor. The "Confessions," however, far surpassed any production of Mr. Neal's in a certain air of cultivation (if not exactly of scholarship) which pervaded it, as well as in the management of its construction—a particular in which the author of "The Battle of Niagara" invariably fails; there is no precision, no finish, about anything he does—always an excessive *force* but little of refined art. Mr. N. seems to be deficient, in a sense of *completeness*. He begins well, vigorously, startlingly, and proceeds by fits, quite at random, now prosing, now exciting vivid interest, but his conclusions are sure to be hurried and indistinct, so that the reader perceives a falling off, and closes the book with dissatisfaction. He has done nothing which, as a whole, is even respectable, and "The Confessions" are quite remarkable for their artistic unity and perfection. But in higher regards they are to be commended. I do not think, indeed, that a better book of its kind has been written

in America. To be sure, it is not precisely the work to place in the hands of a lady, but its scenes of passion are intensely wrought, its incidents are striking and original, its sentiments audacious and suggestive at least, if not at all times tenable. In a word, it is that rare thing, a fiction of *power* without rudeness. Its spirit, in general, resembles that of "Miserrimus" and "Martin Faber."

Partly on account of what most persons would term their licentiousness, partly, also, on account of the prevalent idea that Mr. Neal (who was never very popular with the press) had written them, "The Confessions," by the newspapers, were most unscrupulously misrepresented and abused. The "Commercial Advertiser" of New York, was, it appears, foremost in condemnation, and Mr. Osborn thought proper to avenge his wrongs by the publication of a bulky satirical poem, levelled at the critics in general, but more especially at Colonel Stone, the editor of the "Commercial." This satire (which was published in exquisite style as regards print and paper,) was entitled "The Vision of Rubeta." Owing to the high price necessarily set upon the book, no great many copies were sold, but the few that got into circulation made quite a hubbub, and with reason, for the satire was not only bitter but personal in the last degree. It was, moreover, very censurably indecent—*filthy* is, perhaps, the more appropriate word. The press, without exception, or nearly so, condemned it in loud terms, without taking the trouble to investigate its pretensions as a literary work. But as "The Confessions of a Poet" was *one* of the best novels of its kind ever written in this country, so "The Vision of Rubeta" was decidedly *the best* satire. For its vulgarity and gross personality there is no defence, but its mordacity

cannot be gainsaid. In calling it, however, the best American satire, I do not intend any excessive commendation—for it is, in fact, the *only* satire composed by an American. Trumbull's clumsy work is nothing at all, and then we have Halleck's "Crockers," which is very feeble—but what is there besides? "The Vision" is our best satire, and still a sadly deficient one. It was bold enough and bitter enough, and well constructed and decently versified, but it failed in *sarcasm* because its malignity was permitted to render itself evident. The author is never very severe because he is never sufficiently cool. We laugh not so much at the objects of his satire as we do at himself for getting into so great a passion. But, perhaps, under no circumstances is wit the *forte* of Mr. Osborn. He has few equals at downright invective.

The "Vision" was succeeded by "Arthur Carryl and other Poems," including an additional canto of the satire, and several happy although not in all cases accurate or comprehensive imitations in English of the Greek and Roman metres. "Arthur Carryl" is a fragment, in the manner of "Don Juan." I do not think it especially meritorious. It has, however, a truth-telling and discriminative preface, and its notes are well worthy perusal. Some opinions embraced in these latter on the topic of versification I have examined in one of the series of articles called "Marginalia."

I am not aware that since "Arthur Carryl" Mr. Osborn has written anything more than a "Treatise on Oil Painting," issued not long ago by Messrs. Wiley and Putnam. This work is highly spoken of by those well qualified to judge, but is, I believe, principally a compilation or compendium.

In personal character, Mr. O. is one of the most

remarkable men I ever yet had the pleasure of meeting. He is undoubtedly one of "Nature's own noblemen," full of generosity, courage, honor—chivalrous in every respect, but, unhappily, carrying his ideas of chivalry, or rather of independence, to the point of Quixotism, if not of absolute insanity. He has no doubt been misapprehended, and therefore wronged by the world; but he should not fail to remember that the source of the wrong lay in his own idiosyncrasy—one altogether unintelligible and unappreciable by the mass of mankind.

He is a member of one of the oldest and most influential, formerly one of the wealthiest families in New York. His acquirements and accomplishments are many and unusual. As poet, painter, and musician, he has succeeded nearly equally well, and absolutely succeeded as each. His scholarship is extensive. In the French and Italian languages, he is quite at home, and in everything he is thorough and accurate. His critical abilities are to be highly respected, although he is apt to swear somewhat too roundly by Johnson and Pope. Imagination is not Mr. Osborn's *forte*.

He is about thirty-two or three—certainly not more than thirty-five years of age. In person he is well made, probably five feet ten or eleven, muscular and active. Hair, eyes, and complexion, rather light; fine teeth; the whole expression of the countenance manly, frank, and prepossessing in the highest degree.

FITZ-GREENE HALLECK

THE name of Halleck is at least as well established in the poetical world as that of any American. Our principal poets are, perhaps, most frequently named in this order—Bryant, Halleck, Dana, Sprague, Longfellow, Willis, and so on—Halleck coming second in the series, but holding, in fact, a rank in the public opinion quite equal to that of Bryant. The accuracy of the arrangement as above made may, indeed, be questioned. For my own part, I should have it thus—Longfellow, Bryant, Halleck, Willis, Sprague, Dana; and, estimating rather the poetic capacity than the poems actually accomplished, there are three or four comparatively unknown writers whom I would place in the series between Bryant and Halleck, while there are about a dozen whom I should assign a position between Willis and Sprague. Two dozen at least might find room between Sprague and Dana—this latter, I fear, owing a very large portion of this reputation to his *quondam* editorial connexion with "The North American Review." One or two poets, now in my mind's eye, I should have no hesitation in posting above even Mr. Longfellow—still not intending this as very extravagant praise.

It is noticeable, however, that, in the arrangement which I attribute to the popular understanding, the order observed is nearly, if not exactly, that of the ages—the poetic ages—of the individual poets. Those rank first who were first known. The priority has established the strength of impression. Nor is this result to be accounted for by mere reference to the old saw—that first impressions are the strongest.

Gratitude, surprise, and a species of hyper-patriotic triumph have been blended, and finally confounded with admiration or appreciation in regard to the *pioneers* of American literature, among whom there is not one whose productions have not been grossly overrated by his countrymen. Hitherto we have been in no mood to view with calmness and discuss with discrimination the real claims of the few who were *first* in convincing the mother country that her sons were not all brainless, as at one period she half affected and wholly wished to believe. Is there any one so blind as not to see that Mr. Cooper, for example, owes much, and Mr. Paulding nearly all, of his reputation as a novelist to his early occupation of the field? Is there any one so dull as not to know that fictions which neither of these gentlemen *could* have written are written daily by native authors, without attracting much more of commendation than can be included in a newspaper paragraph? And, again, is there any one so prejudiced as not to acknowledge that all this happens because there is no longer either reason or wit in the query, "Who reads an American book?"

I mean to say, of course, that Mr. Halleck, in the *apparent* public estimate, maintains a somewhat better position than that to which, on absolute grounds, he is entitled. There is something, too, in the *bonhommie* of certain of his compositions—something altogether distinct from poetic merit—which has aided to establish him; and much, also, must be admitted on the score of his personal popularity, which is deservedly great. With all these allowances, however, there will still be found a large amount of poetical fame to which he is *fairly* entitled.

He has written very little, although he began at an early age—when quite a boy, indeed. His

"juvenile" works, however, have been kept very judiciously from the public eye. Attention was first called to him by his satires, signed "Croaker" and "Croaker & Co.," published in "The New York Evening Post," in 1819. Of these the pieces with the signature "*Croaker & Co.*" were the joint work of Halleck and his friend Drake. The political and personal features of these *jeux d'esprit* gave them a consequence and a notoriety to which they are entitled on no other account. They are not without a species of drollery, but are loosely and no doubt carelessly written.

Neither was "Fanny," which closely followed the "Croakers," constructed with any great deliberation. "It was printed," say the ordinary memoirs, "within three weeks from its commencement"; but the truth is, that a couple of days would have been an ample allowance of time for any such composition. If we except a certain gentlemanly ease and *insouciance*, with some fancy of illustration, there is really very little about this poem to be admired. There has been no positive avowal of its authorship, although there can be no doubt of its having been written by Halleck. He, I presume, does not esteem it very highly. It is a mere extravaganza, in close imitation of "Don Juan"—a vehicle for squibs at cotemporary persons and things.

Our poet, indeed, seems to have been much impressed by "Don Juan," and attempts to engraft its farcicalities even upon the grace and delicacy of "Alnwick Castle," as, for example, in—

> Men in the coal and cattle line,
> From Teviot's bard and hero land,
> From royal Berwick's beach of sand,
> From Wooler, Morpeth, Hexham, *and*
> Newcastle upon Tyne.

These things may lay claim to oddity, but no more. They are totally out of keeping with the tone of the sweet poem into which they are thus clumsily introduced, and serve no other purpose than to deprive it of all unity of effect. If a poet *must* be farcical, let him be just that; he can be nothing better at the same moment. To be drolly sentimental, or even sentimentally droll, is intolerable to men and gods and columns.

"Alnwick Castle" is distinguished, in general, by that air of quiet grace, both in thought and expression, which is the prevailing feature of the muse of Halleck. Its second stanza is a good specimen of this manner. The commencement of the fourth belongs to a very high order of poetry.

> Wild roses by the Abbey towers
> Are gay in their young bed and bloom—
> *They were born of a race of funeral flowers*
> That garlanded, in long-gone hours,
> A Templar's knightly tomb.

This is gloriously imaginative, and the effect is singularly increased by the sudden transition from iambuses to anapæsts. The passage is, I think, the noblest to be found in Halleck, and I would be at a loss to discover its parallel in all American poetry.

"Marco Bozzaris" has much lyrical, without any great amount of *ideal* beauty. Force is its prevailing feature—force resulting rather from well-ordered metre, vigorous rhythm, and a judicious disposal of the circumstances of the poem, than from any of the truer lyric material. I should do my conscience great wrong were I to speak of "Marco Bozzaris" as it is the fashion to speak of it, at least in print. Even as a lyric or ode it is surpassed by

many American and a multitude of foreign compositions of a similar character.

"Burns" has numerous passages exemplifying its author's felicity of *expression;* as, for instance—

> Such graves as his are pilgrim shrines—
> Shrines to no code or creed confined—
> *The Delphian vales, the Palestines,*
> *The Meccas of the mind.*

And, again—

> There have been loftier themes than his,
> *And longer scrolls and louder lyres,*
> *And lays lit up with Poesy's*
> *Purer and holier fires.*

But to the *sentiment* involved in this last quatrain I feel disposed to yield an assent more thorough than might be expected. Burns, indeed, was the puppet of circumstance. As a poet, no person on the face of the earth has been more extravagantly, more absurdly overrated.

"The Poet's Daughter" is one of the most characteristic works of Halleck, abounding in his most distinctive traits, grace, expression, repose, *insouciance.* The vulgarity of

> I'm busy in the cotton trade
> And sugar line,

has, I rejoice to see, been omitted in the late editions. The eleventh stanza is certainly not English as it stands, and, besides, is quite unintelligible. What is the meaning of this—

> But her who asks, though first among
> The good, the beautiful, the young,
> The birthright of a spell more strong
> Than these have brought her.

The "Lines on the Death of Joseph Rodman Drake" is, as a whole, one of the best poems of its author. Its simplicity and delicacy of sentiment will recommend it to all readers. It is, however, carelessly written, and the first quatrain,

> Green be the turf above thee,
> Friend of my better days—
> None knew thee but to love thee,
> Nor named thee but to praise.

although beautiful, bears too close a resemblance to the still more beautiful lines of Wordsworth—

> She dwelt among the untrodden ways
> Beside the springs of Dove,
> A maid whom there were none to praise,
> And very few to love.

In versification Mr. Halleck is much as usual, although in this regard Mr. Bryant has paid him numerous compliments. "Marco Bozzaris" has certainly some vigor of rhythm, but its author, in short, writes carelessly, loosely, and, as a matter of course, seldom effectively, so far as the outworks of literature are concerned.

Of late days he has nearly given up the muses, and we recognise his existence as a poet chiefly by occasional translations from the Spanish or German.

Personally, he is a man to be admired, respected, but more especially beloved. His address has all the captivating *bonhommie* which is the leading feature of his poetry, and, indeed, of his whole moral nature. With his friends he is all ardor, enthusiasm and cordiality, but to the world at large he is reserved, shunning society, into which he is seduced only with difficulty, and upon rare occasions. The love of solitude seems to have become with him a passion.

He is a good modern linguist, and an excellent *belles lettres* scholar; in general, has read a great deal, although very discursively. He is what the world calls *ultra* in most of his opinions, more particularly about literature and politics, and is fond of broaching and supporting paradoxes. He converses fluently, with animation and zeal; is choice and accurate in his language, exceedingly quick at repartee, and apt at anecdote. His manners are courteous, with dignity and a little tincture of Gallicism. His age is about fifty. In height he is probably five feet seven. He *has been* stout, but may now be called well-proportioned. His forehead is a noble one, broad, massive and intellectual, a little bald about the temples; eyes dark and brilliant, but not large; nose Grecian: chin prominent; mouth finely chiselled and full of expression, although the lips are thin;—his smile is peculiarly sweet.

In "Graham's Magazine" for September, 1843, there appeared an engraving of Mr. Halleck from a painting by Inman. The likeness conveys a good general idea of the man, but is far too stout and youthful-looking for his appearance at present.

His usual pursuits have been commercial, but he is now the principal superintendent of the business of Mr. John Jacob Astor. He is unmarried.

ANN S. STEPHENS

MRS. STEPHENS has made no collection of her works, but has written much for the magazines, and well. Her compositions have been brief tales with occasional poems. She made her first "sensation" in obtaining a preminum of four hundred dollars, offered for "the best prose story" by some one of our journals, her "Mary Derwent" proving the successful article. The *amount* of the prize, however—a much larger one than it has been the custom to offer—had more to do with the *éclât* of the success than had the positive merit of the tale, although this is very considerable. She has subsequently written several better things—"Malina Gray," for example, "Alice Copley," and "The Two Dukes." These are on serious subjects. In comic ones she has comparatively failed. She is fond of the bold, striking, trenchant—in a word, of the melo-dramatic; has a quick appreciation of the picturesque, and is not unskilful in delineations of character. She seizes adroitly on salient incidents and presents them with vividness to the eye, but in their combinations or adaptations she is by no means so thoroughly at home—that is to say, her plots are not so good as are their individual items. Her style is what the critics usually term "powerful," but lacks real power through its verboseness and floridity. It is, in fact, generally turgid—even bombastic—involved, needlessly parenthetical, and superabundant in epithets, although these latter are frequently well

chosen. Her sentences are, also, for the most part too long; we forget their commencements ere we get at their terminations. Her faults, nevertheless, both in matter and manner, belong to the effervescence of high talent, if not exactly of genius.

Of Mrs. Stephens' poetry I have seen so very little that I feel myself scarcely in condition to speak of it.

She began her literary life, I believe, by editing "The Portland Magazine," and has since been announced as editress of "The Ladies' Companion," a monthly journal published some years ago in New York, and also, at a later period, of "Graham's Magazine," and subsequently, again of "Peterson's National Magazine." These announcements were announcements and no more; the lady had nothing to do with the editorial control of either of the three last-named works.

The portrait of Mrs. Stephens which appeared in "Graham's Magazine" for November, 1844, cannot fairly be considered a likeness at all. She is tall and slightly inclined to *embonpoint*—an English figure. Her forehead is somewhat low, but broad; the features generally massive, but full of life and intellectuality. The eyes are blue and brilliant; the hair blonde and very luxuriant.

EVERT A. DUYCKINCK

MR. DUYCKINCK is one of the most influential of the New York *littérateurs*, and has done a great deal for the interests of American letters. Not the least important service rendered by him was the projection and editorship of Wiley and Putnam's "Library of Choice Reading," a series which brought to public notice many valuable foreign works which had been suffering under neglect in this country, and at the same time afforded unwonted encouragement to native authors by publishing their books, in good style and in good company, without trouble or risk to the authors themselves, and in the very teeth of the disadvantages arising from the want of an international copyright law. At one period it seemed that this happy scheme was to be overwhelmed by the competition of rival publishers—taken, in fact, quite out of the hands of those who, by "right of discovery," were entitled at least to its first fruits. A great variety of "Libraries," in imitation, were set on foot, but whatever may have been the temporary success of any of these latter, the original one had already too well established itself in the public favor to be overthrown, and thus has not been prevented from proving of great benefit to our literature at large.

Mr. Duyckinck has slyly acquired much fame and numerous admirers under the *nom de plume* of "Felix Merry." The various essays thus signed have attracted attention everywhere from the

judicious. The style is remarkable for its very unusual blending of purity and ease with a seemingly inconsistent originality, force and independence.

"Felix Merry," in connexion with Mr. Cornelius Matthews, was one of the editors and originators of "Arcturus," decidedly the very best magazine in many respects ever published in the United States. A large number of its most interesting papers were the work of Mr. D. The magazine was, upon the whole, a little *too good* to enjoy extensive popularity—although I am here using an equivocal phrase, for a *better* journal might have been far more acceptable to the public. I must be understood, then, as employing the epithet "good" in the sense of the literary quietists. The general taste of "Arcturus" was, I think, *excessively tasteful;* but this character applies rather more to its external or mechanical appearance than to its essential qualities. Unhappily, magazines and other similar publications, are, in the beginning, judged chiefly by externals. People saw "Arcturus" *looking* very much like other works which had failed through notorious dullness, although admitted as *arbitri elegantiarum* in all points of what is termed taste or decorum; and they, the people, had no patience to examine any farther. Cæsar's wife was required not only to *be* virtuous but to seem so, and in letters it is demanded not only that we be not stupid, but that we do not array ourselves in the habiliments of stupidity.

It cannot be said of "Arcturus" exactly that it wanted *force.* It was deficient in power of impression, and this deficiency is to be attributed mainly to the exceeding brevity of its articles—a brevity that degenerated into mere paragraphism, precluding dissertation or argument, and thus all

permanent effect. The magazine, in fact, had some of the worst or most inconvenient features without any of the compensating advantages of a weekly literary newspaper. The mannerism to which I refer seemed to have its source in undue admiration and consequent imitation of "The Spectator."

In addition to his more obvious literary engagements, Mr. Duyckinck writes a great deal, editorially and otherwise, for "The Democratic Review," "The Morning News," and other periodicals.

In character he is remarkable, distinguished for the *bonhommie* of his manner, his simplicity and single-mindedness, his active beneficence, his hatred of wrong done even to any enemy, and especially for an almost Quixotic fidelity to his friends. He seems in perpetual good humor with all things, and I have no doubt that in his secret heart he is an optimist.

In person he is equally simple as in character—the one is a *pendent* of the other. He is about five feet eight inches high, somewhat slender. The forehead, phrenologically, is a good one; eyes and hair light; the whole expression of the face that of serenity and benevolence, contributing to give an idea of youthfulness. He is probably thirty, but does not seem to be twenty-five. His dress, also, is in full keeping with his character, scrupulously neat but plain, and conveying an instantaneous conviction of the gentleman. He is a descendant of one of the oldest and best Dutch families in the state. Married.

MARY GOVE

MRS. MARY GOVE, under the pseudonym of "Mary Orme," has written many excellent papers for the magazines. Her subjects are usually tinctured with the mysticism of the transcendentalists, but are truly imaginative. Her style is quite remarkable for its luminousness and precision—two qualities very rare with her sex. An article entitled "The Gift of Prophecy," published originally in "The Broadway Journal," is a fine specimen of her manner.

Mrs. Gove, however, has acquired less notoriety by her literary compositions than by her lectures on physiology to classes of females. These lectures are said to have been instructive and useful; they certainly elicited much attention. Mrs. G. has also given public discourses on Mesmerism, I believe, and other similar themes—matters which put to the severest test the credulity, or, more properly, the faith of mankind. She is, I think, a Mesmerist, a Swedenborgian, a phrenologist, a homœopathist, and a disciple of Priessnitz—what more I am not prepared to say.

She is rather below the medium height, somewhat thin, with dark hair and keen, intelligent black eyes. She converses well and with enthusiasm. In many respects a very interesting woman.

JAMES ALDRICH

MR. ALDRICH has written much for the magazines, &c., and at one time assisted Mr. Park Benjamin in the conduct of "The New World." He also originated, I believe, and edited a not very long-lived or successful weekly paper, called "The Literary Gazette," an imitation in its external appearance of the London journal of the same name. I am not aware that he has made any collection of his writings. His poems abound in the true poetic spirit, but they are frequently chargeable with plagiarism, or something much like it. True, I have seen but three of Mr. Aldrich's compositions in verse—the three (or perhaps there are four of them,) included by Doctor Griswold in his "Poets and Poetry of America." Of these three, (or four,) however, there are two which I cannot help regarding as palpable plagiarisms. Of one of them, in especial, "*A* Death-Bed," it is impossible to say a plausible word in defence. Both in matter and manner it is nearly identical with a little piece entitled "*The* Death-Bed," by Thomas Hood.

The charge of plagiarism, nevertheless, is a purely literary one; and a plagiarism even distinctly proved by no means necessarily involves any moral delinquency. This proposition applies very especially to what appear to be *poetical* thefts. The poetic sentiment presupposes a keen appreciation of the beautiful with a longing for its assimilation into the poetic identity. What the poet intensely admires becomes, thus, in very fact, although only

partially, a portion of his own soul. Within this soul it has a secondary origination; and the poet, thus possessed by another's thought, cannot be said to take of it possession. But in either view he thoroughly feels it as *his own;* and the tendency to this feeling is counteracted only by the sensible presence of the true, palpable origin of the thought in the volume whence he has derived it—an origin which, in the long lapse of years, it is impossible *not* to forget, should the thought itself, as it often is, be forgotten. But the frailest association will regenerate it: it springs up with all the vigor of a new birth; its absolute originality is not with the poet a matter even of suspicion; and when he has written it and printed it, and on its account is charged with plagiarism, there will be no one more entirely astounded than himself. Now, from what I have said, it appears that the liability to accidents of this character is in the direct ratio of the poetic sentiment, of the susceptibility to the poetic impression; and, in fact, all literary history demonstrates that, for the most frequent and palpable plagiarisms we must search the works of the most eminent poets.

Since penning the above I have found five quatrains by Mr. Aldrich, with the heading "Molly Gray." These verses are in the fullest exemplification of what I have just said of their author, evincing at once, in the most remarkable manner, both his merit as an imaginative poet and his unconquerable proneness to imitation. I quote the two concluding quatrains.

> Pretty, fairy Molly Gray!
> What may thy fit emblems be?
> Stream or star or bird or flower—
> They are all too poor for thee.

No type to match thy beauty
My wandering fancy brings—
Not fairer than its chrysalis
Thy soul with its golden wings!

Here the "Pretty, fairy Molly Gray!" will put every reader in mind of Tennyson's "Airy, fairy Lillian!" by which Mr. Aldrich's whole poem has been clearly suggested; but the thought in the *finale* is, as far as I know anything about it, original, and is not more happy than happily expressed.

Mr. Aldrich is about thirty-six years of age. In regard to his person there is nothing to be especially noted.

HENRY CARY

DOCTOR GRISWOLD introduces Mr. Cary to the appendix of "The Poet and Poetry," as Mr. Henry Carey, and gives him credit for an Anacreontic song of much merit entitled, or commencing, "Old Wine to Drink." This was *not* written by Mr. C. He has composed little verse, if any, but, under the *nom de plume* of "John Waters," has acquired some note by a series of prose essays in "The New York American," and "The Knickerbocker." These essays have merit, unquestionably, but some person, in an article furnished "The Broadway Journal," before my assumption of its editorship, has gone to the extreme of toadyism in their praise. This critic (possibly Mr. Briggs) thinks that John Waters "is in some sort a Sam Rogers"—"resembles Lamb in fastidiousness of taste" —"has a finer artistic taste than the author of the 'Sketch Book'"—that his "sentences are the most perfect in the language—too perfect to be peculiar"—that "it would be a vain task to hunt through them all for a superfluous conjunction," and that "we need them (the works of John Waters!) as models of style in these days of rhodomontades and *Macaulayisms!*"

The truth seems to be that Mr. Cary is a vivacious, fanciful, entertaining essayist—a fifth or sixth rate one—with a style that, as times go—in view of such stylists as Mr. Briggs, for example—may be termed respectable, and no more. What the critic of the B. J. wishes us to understand by a style that

is "too perfect," "the most perfect," etc., it is scarcely worth while to inquire, since it is generally supposed that "perfect" admits of no degrees of comparison; but if Mr. Briggs (or whoever it is) finds it "a vain task to hunt" through all Mr. John Waters' works "for a superfluous conjunction," there are few schoolboys who would not prove more successful hunters than Mr. Briggs.

"It was well filled," says the essayist, on the very page containing these encomiums, *and* yet the number of performers," etc. "We paid our visit to the incomparable ruins of the castle, *and* then proceeded to retrace our steps, and, examine our wheels at every post-house, reached," etc. "After consultation with a mechanic at Heildelberg, *and* finding that," etc. The last sentence should read, "Finding, after consultation," etc.—the "and" would thus be avoided. Those in the two sentences first quoted are obviously pleonastic. Mr. Cary, in fact, abounds *very especially* in superfluities—(as here, for example, "He seated himself at a piano *that was* near the front of the stage")—and, to speak the truth, is continually guilty of all kinds of grammatical improprieties. I repeat that, in this respect, he is decent, and no more.

Mr. Cary is what Doctor Griswold calls a "gentleman of elegant leisure." He is wealthy and much addicted to letters and *virtû*. For a long time he was President of the Phœnix Bank of New York, and the principal part of his life has been devoted to business. There is nothing remarkable about his personable appearance.

CHRISTOPHER PEASE CRANCH

THE REVEREND C. P. CRANCH is one of the least intolerable of the school of Boston transcendentalists—and, in fact, I believe that he has at last "come out from among them," abandoned their doctrines (whatever they are) and given up their company in disgust. He was at one time one of the most noted, and undoubtedly one of the least absurd contributors to "The Dial," but has reformed his habits of thought and speech, domiciliated himself in New York, and set up the easel of an artist in one of the Gothic chambers of the University.

About two years ago a volume of "Poems by Christopher Pease Cranch" was published by Carey and Hart. It was most unmercifully treated by the critics, and much injustice, in my opinion, was done to the poet. He seems to me to possess unusual vivacity of fancy and dexterity of expression, while his versification is remarkable for its accuracy, vigor, and even for its originality of effect. I might say, perhaps, rather more than all this, and maintain that he has imagination if he would only condescend to employ it, which he will not, or *would* not until lately—the word-compounders and quibble concoctors of Frogpondium having inoculated him with a preference for Imagination's half sister, the Cinderella Fancy. Mr. Cranch has seldom contented himself with harmonious combinations of thought. There must always be, to afford him perfect satisfaction, a certain amount of the odd, of the whimsical, of the affected, of the *bizarre*. He is full of absurd conceits as Cowley or Donne, with this dif-

ference, that the conceits of these latter are Euphuisms beyond redemption—flat, irremediable, self-contented nonsensicalities, and in so much are good of their kind; but the conceits of Mr. Cranch are, for the most part, conceits intentionally manufactured, for conceit's sake, out of the material for properly imaginative, harmonious, proportionate, or poetical ideas. We see every moment that he has been at uncommon *pains* to make a fool of himself.

But perhaps I am wrong in supposing that I am at all in condition to decide on the merits of Mr. C.'s poetry, which is professedly addressed to the few. "Him we will seek," says the poet—

> Him we will seek, and none but him,
> Whose inward sense hath not grown dim;
> Whose soul is steeped in Nature's tinct,
> And to the Universal linked;
> Who loves the beauteous Infinite
> With deep and ever new delight,
> And carrieth where'er he goes
> The inborn sweetness of the rose,
> The perfume as of Paradise—
> The talisman above all price—
> The optic glass that wins from far
> The meaning of the utmost star—
> The key that opes the golden doors
> Where earth and heaven have piled their stores—
> The magic ring, the enchanter's wand—
> The title-deed to Wonder-Land—
> The wisdom that o'erlooketh sense,
> The clairvoyance of Innocence.

This is all very well, fanciful, pretty, and neatly turned—all with the exception of the last two lines, and it is a pity they were not left out. It is laughable to see that the transcendental poets, if beguiled for a minute or two into respectable English and common sense, are always sure to remember their cue just as they get to the end of their song, which,

by way of *salvo*, they then round off with a bit of doggerel about "wisdom that o'erlook*eth* sense" and "the clairvoyance of Innocence." It is especially observable that, in adopting the cant of thought, the cant of phraseology is adopted at the same instant. Can Mr. Cranch, or can anybody else, inform me why it is that, in the really sensible opening passages of what I have here quoted, he employs the modern, and only in the final couplet of goose-therumfoodle makes use of the obsolete terminations of verbs in the third person singular, present tense?

One of the best of Mr. Cranch's compositions is undoubtedly his poem on *Niagara*. It has some natural thoughts, and grand ones, suiting the subject; but then they are more than half-divested of their nature by the attempt at adorning them with *oddity* of expression. *Quaintness* is an admissible and important adjunct to ideality—an adjunct whose value has been long misapprehended—but in picturing the sublime it is altogether out of place. What idea of power, of grandeur, for example, can any human being connect even with Niagara, when Niagara is described in language so trippingly fantastical, so palpably adapted to a purpose, as that which follows?

I stood upon a speck of ground;
Before me fell a stormy ocean.
I was like a captive bound;
And around
A universe of sound
Troubled the heavens with ever-quivering motion.

Down, down forever—down, down forever—
Something falling, falling, falling;
Up, up forever—up, up forever,
Resting never,
Boiling up forever,
Steam-clouds shot up with thunder-bursts appalling.

It is difficult to conceive anything more ludicrously out of keeping than the thoughts of these stanzas and the *petit-maître*, fidgety, hop-skip-and-jump air of the words and the Liliputian parts of the versification.

A somewhat similar metre is adopted by Mr. C. in his "Lines on Hearing Triumphant Music," but as the subject is essentially different, so the effect is by no means so displeasing. I copy one of the stanzas as the noblest individual passage which I can find among all the poems of its author.

> That glorious strain!
> Oh, from my brain
> *I see the shadow flitting like scared ghosts.*
> *A light—a light*
> *Shines in to-night*
> *Round the good angels trooping to their posts,*
> *And the black cloud is rent in twain*
> *Before the ascending strain.*

Mr. Cranch is well educated, and quite accomplished. Like Mr. Osborn, he is musician, painter, and poet, being in each capacity very respectably successful.

He is about thirty-three or four years of age; in height, perhaps five feet eleven; athletic; front face not unhandsome—the forehead evincing intellect, and the smile pleasant; but the profile is marred by the turning up of the nose, and, altogether is hard and disagreeable. His eyes and hair are dark brown—the latter worn short, slightly inclined to curl. Thick whiskers meeting under the chin, and much out of keeping with the shirtcollar *à la Byron*. Dresses with marked plainness. He is married

SARAH MARGARET FULLER

MISS FULLER was at one time editor, or one of the editors of "The Dial," to which she contributed many of the most forcible and certainly some of the most peculiar papers. She is known, too, by "Summer on the Lakes," a remarkable assemblage of sketches, issued in 1844, by Little & Brown, of Boston. More lately she has published "Woman in the Nineteenth Century," a work which has occasioned much discussion, having had the good fortune to be warmly abused and chivalrously defended. At present, she is assistant editor of "The New York Tribune," or rather a salaried contributor to that journal, for which she has furnished a great variety of matter, chiefly notices of new books, etc., etc., her articles being designated by an asterisk. Two of the best of them were a review of Professor Longfellow's late magnificent edition of his own works, (with a portrait,) and an appeal to the public in behalf of her friend Harro Harring. The review did her infinite credit; it was frank, candid, independent—in even ludicrous contrast to the usual mere glorifications of the day, giving honor *only* where honor was due, yet evincing the most thorough capacity to appreciate and the most sincere intention to place in the fairest light the real and idiosyncratic merits of the poet.

In my opinion it is one of the very few reviews of Longfellow's poems, ever published in America, of which the critics have not had abundant reason

to be ashamed. Mr. Longfellow is entitled to a certain and very distinguished rank among the poets of his country, but that country is disgraced by the evident toadyism which would award to his social position and influence, to his fine paper and large type, to his morocco binding and gilt edges, to his flattering portrait of himself, and to the illustrations of his poems by Huntingdon, that amount of indiscriminate approbation which neither could nor would have been given to the poems themselves.

The defence of Harro Harring, or rather the Philipic against those who were doing him wrong, was one of the most eloquent and well-*put* articles I have ever yet seen in a newspaper.

"Woman in the Nineteenth Century" is a book which few women in the country could have written, and no woman in the country would have published, with the exception of Miss Fuller. In the way of independence, of unmitigated radicalism, it is one of the "Curiosities of American Literature," and Doctor Griswold should include it in his book. I need scarcely say that the essay is nervous, forcible, thoughtful, suggestive, brilliant, and to a certain extent scholar-like—for all that Miss Fuller produces is entitled to these epithets—but I must say that the conclusions reached are only in part my own. Not that they are too bold, by any means—too novel, too startling, or too dangerous in their consequences, but that in their attainment too many premises have been distorted, and too many analogical inferences left altogether out of sight. I mean to say that the intention of the Deity as regards sexual differences—an intention which can be distinctly comprehended only by throwing the exterior (more sensitive) portions of the mental

retina *casually* over the wide field of universal *analogy*—I mean to say that this *intention* has not been sufficiently considered. Miss Fuller has erred, too, through her own excessive objectiveness. She judges *woman* by the heart and intellect of Miss Fuller, but there are not more than one or two dozen Miss Fullers on the whole face of the earth. Holding these opinions in regard to "Woman in the Nineteenth Century," I still feel myself called upon to disavow the silly, condemnatory criticism of the work which appeared in one of the earlier numbers of "The Broadway Journal." That article was *not* written by myself, and *was* written by my associate, Mr. Briggs.

The most favorable estimate of Miss Fuller's genius (for high genius she unquestionably possesses) is to be obtained, perhaps, from her contributions to "The Dial," and from her "Summer on the Lakes." Many of the *descriptions* in this volume are unrivalled for *graphicality*, (why is there not such a word?) for the force with which they convey the true by the novel or unexpected, by the introduction of touches which other artists would be sure to omit as irrelevant to the subject. This faculty, too, springs from her subjectiveness, which leads her to paint a scene less by its features than by its effects.

Here, for example, is a portion of her account of Niagara:—

> Daily these proportions widened and towered more and more upon my sight, and I got at last a proper foreground for these sublime distances. Before coming away, I think I really saw the full wonder of the scene. After awhile it *so drew me into itself as to inspire an undefined dread, such as I never knew before, such as may be felt when death is about to usher us into a new existence.* The perpetual trampling of the waters seized my senses. *I felt that no*

other sound, however near, could be heard, and would start and look behind me for a foe. I realized the identity of that mood of nature in which these waters were poured down with such absorbing force, with that in which the Indian was shaped on the same soil. For continually upon my mind came, unsought and unwelcome, *images, such as had never haunted it before, of naked savages stealing behind me with uplifted tomahawks.* Again and again this illusion recurred, and even *after I had thought it over, and tried to shake it off, I could not help starting and looking behind me.* What I liked best was to sit on Table Rock close to the great fall; *there all power of observing details, all separate consciousness was quite lost.*

The truthfulness of the passages italicized will be felt by all; the feelings described are, perhaps, experienced by every (imaginative) person who visits the fall; but most persons, through predominant subjectiveness, would scarcely be conscious of the feelings, or, at best, would never think of employing them in an attempt to convey to others an impression of the scene. Hence so many desperate failures to convey it on the part of ordinary tourists. Mr. William W. Lord, to be sure, in his poem "Niagara," is sufficiently objective; he describes not the fall, but very properly the effect of the fall upon *him.* He says that it made him think of his *own* greatness, of his *own* superiority, and so forth, and so forth; and it is only when we come to think that the thought of Mr. Lord's greatness is quite idiosyncratic, confined exclusively to Mr. Lord, that we are in condition to understand how, in despite of his objectiveness, he has failed to convey an idea of anything beyond one Mr. William W. Lord.

From the essay entitled "Philip Van Artevelde," I copy a paragraph which will serve at once to exemplify Miss Fuller's more earnest (declamatory) style, and to show the tenor of her prospective speculations:—

At Chicago I read again "Philip Van Artevelde," and certain passages in it will always be in my mind associated with the deep sound of the lake, as heard in the night. I used to read a short time at night, and then open the blind to look out. The moon would be full upon the lake, and the calm breath, pure light, and the deep voice, harmonized well with the thought of the Flemish hero. When will this country have such a man? It is what she needs—no thin Idealist, no coarse Realist, but a man whose eye reads the heavens while his feet step firmly on the ground, and his hands are strong and dexterous in the use of human instruments. A man, religious, virtuous, and—sagacious; a man of universal sympathies, but self-possessed; a man who knows the region of emotion, though he is not its slave; a man to whom this world is no mere spectacle or fleeting shadow, but a great, solemn game, to be played with good heed, for its stakes are of eternal value, yet who, if his own play be true, heeds not what he loses by the falsehood of others. A man who lives from the past, yet knows that its honey can but moderately avail him; whose comprehensive eye scans the present, neither infatuated by its golden lures nor chilled by its many ventures; who possesses prescience, as the wise man must, but not so far as to be driven mad to-day by the gift which discerns to-morrow. When there is such a man for America, the thought which urges her on will be expressed.

From what I have quoted a *general* conception of the prose style of the authoress may be gathered. Her manner, however, is infinitely varied. It is always forcible—but I am not sure that it is always anything else, unless I say picturesque. It rather indicates than evinces scholarship. Perhaps only the scholastic, or, more properly, those accustomed to look narrowly at the structure of phrases, would be willing to acquit her of ignorance of grammar—would be willing to attribute her slovenliness to disregard of the shell in anxiety for the kernel; or to waywardness, or to affectation, or to blind reverence for Carlyle—would be able to detect, in her

strange and continual inaccuracies, a capacity for the accurate.

"I cannot sympathize with such an apprehension; the spectacle is *capable to* swallow *up* all such objects."

"It is fearful, too, to know, as you look, that whatever has been swallowed by the cataract, is *like* to rise suddenly to light."

"I took our *mutual* friends to see her."

"It was always obvious that they had nothing in common *between them.*"

"The Indian cannot be looked at truly *except* by a poetic eye."

"McKenney's Tour to the Lakes gives some facts not to be met *with* elsewhere."

"There is that mixture of culture and rudeness in the aspect of things *as* gives a feeling of freedom," etc., etc., etc.

These are merely a few, a very few instances, taken at random from among a multitude of *wilful* murders committed by Miss Fuller on the American of President Polk. She uses, too, the word "ignore," a vulgarity adopted only of late days (and to no good purpose, since there is no necessity for it) from the barbarisms of the law, and makes no scruple of giving the Yankee interpretation to the verbs "witness" and "realize," to say nothing of "use," as in the sentence, "I used to read a short time at night." It will not do to say, in defence of such words, that in such senses they may be found in certain dictionaries—in that of Bolles', for instance;—*some* kind of "authority" may be found for *any* kind of vulgarity under the sun.

In spite of these things, however, and of her frequent unjustifiable Carlyleisms, (such as that of writing sentences which are no sentences, since, to be parsed, reference must be had to sentences preceding,) the style of Miss Fuller is one of the very best with which I am acquainted. In general effect,

I know no style which surpasses it. It is singularly piquant, vivid, terse, bold, luminous—leaving details out of sight, it is everything that a style need be.

I believe that Miss Fuller has written much poetry, although she has published little. That little is tainted with the affectation of the *transcendentalists*, (I used this term, of course, in the sense which the public of late days seems resolved to give it,) but is brimful of the poetic *sentiment*. Here, for example, is something in Coleridge's manner, of which the author of "Genevieve" might have had no reason to be ashamed:—

A maiden sat beneath a tree;
Tear-bedewed her pale cheeks be,
And she sighed heavily.

From forth the wood into the *light*
A hunter strides with carol *light*,
And a glance so bold and bright.

He careless stopped and eyed the maid:
"Why weepest thou?" he gently said;
"I love thee well, be not afraid."

He takes her hand and leads her on—
She should have waited there alone,
For he was not her chosen one.

He *leans* her head upon his breast—
She knew 'twas not her home of rest,
But, ah, she had been sore distrest.

The sacred stars looked sadly down;
The parting moon appeared to frown,
To see thus dimmed the diamond crown.

Then from the thicket starts a deer—
The huntsman, seizing *on* his spear
Cries, "Maiden, wait thou for me here."

She sees him vanish into night—
She starts from sleep in deep affright,
For it was not her own true knight.

Though but in dream Gunhilda failed—
Though but a fancied ill assailed—
Though she but fancied fault bewailed—

Yet thought of day makes dream of night;
She is not worthy of the knight;
The inmost altar burns not bright.

If loneliness thou canst not bear—
Cannot the dragon's venom dare—
Of the pure meed thou shouldst despair.

Now sadder that lone maiden sighs;
Far bitterer tears profane her eyes;
Crushed in the dust her heart's flower lies.

To show the evident carelessness with which this poem was constructed, I have italicized an identical rhyme (of about the same force in versification as an identical proposition in logic) and two grammatical improprieties. *To lean* is a neuter verb, and "seizing *on*" is not properly to be called a pleonasm, merely because it is—nothing at all. The concluding line is difficult of pronunciation through excess of consonants. I should have preferred, indeed, the antepenultimate tristich as the *finale* of the poem.

The supposition that the book of an author is a thing apart from the author's self, is, I think, ill-founded. The soul is a cipher, in the sense of a cryptograph; and the shorter a cryptograph is, the more difficulty there is in its comprehension—at a certain point of brevity it would bid defiance to an army of Champollions. And thus he who has written very little, may in that little either conceal his spirit or convey quite an erroneous idea of it—

of his acquirements, talents, temper, manner, tenor and depth (or shallowness) of thought—in a word, of his character, of himself. But this is impossible with him who has written much. Of such a person we get, from his books, not merely a just, but the most just representation. Bulwer, the individual, personal man, in a green velvet waistcoat and amber gloves, is not by any means the veritable Sir Edward Lytton, who is discoverable only in "Ernest Maltravers," where his soul is deliberately and nakedly set forth. And who would ever know Dickens by looking at him or talking with him, or doing anything with him except reading his "Curiosity Shop"? What poet, in especial, but must feel at least the better portion of himself more fairly represented in even his commonest sonnet, (earnestly written,) than in his most elaborate or most intimate personalities?

I put all this as a general proposition, to which Miss Fuller affords a marked exception—to this extent, that her personal character and her printed book are merely one and the same thing. We get access to her soul *as* directly from the one as from the other—no *more* readily from this than from that—easily from either. Her acts are bookish, and her books are less thoughts than acts. Her literary and her conversational manner are identical. Here is a passage from her "Summer on the Lakes":—

> The rapids enchanted me far beyond what I expected; they are so swift that they cease to *seem* so—you can think only of their beauty. The fountain beyond the Moss islands I discovered for myself, and thought it for some time an *accidental* beauty which it would not do to *leave*, lest I might never see it again. After I found it *permanent*, I returned many times to watch the play of its crest. In the little waterfall beyond, Nature seems, as she often does, to have made a *study* for some larger design. She delights

in this—a sketch within a sketch—a dream within *a dream* Wherever we see it, the lines of the great buttress in the fragment of stone, the hues of the waterfall, copied in the flowers that *star* its bordering mosses, we are *delighted;* for all the lineaments become *fluent*, and we mould the scene in congenial thought with its *genius*.

Now all this is precisely as Miss Fuller would *speak* it. She is perpetually saying just such things in just such words. To get the *conversational* woman in the mind's eye, all that is needed is to imagine her reciting the paragraph just quoted: but first let us have the *personal* woman. She is of the medium height; nothing remarkable about the figure; a profusion of lustrous light hair; eyes a bluish gray, full of fire; capacious forehead; the mouth when in repose indicates profound sensibility, capacity for affection, for love—when moved by a slight smile, it becomes even beautiful in the intensity of this expression; but the upper lip, as if impelled by the action of involuntary muscles, habitually uplifts itself, conveying the impression of a sneer. Imagine, now, a person of this description looking you at one moment earnestly in the face, at the next seeming to look only within her own spirit or at the wall; moving nervously every now and then in her chair; speaking in a high key, but musically, deliberately, (not hurriedly or loudly,) with a delicious distinctness of enunciation—speaking, I say, the paragraph in question, and emphasizing the words which I have italicized, not by impulsion of the breath, (as is usual,) but by drawing them out as long as possible, nearly closing her eyes the while—imagine all this, and we have both the woman and the authoress before us.

JAMES LAWSON

MR. LAWSON has published, I believe, only "Giordano," a tragedy, and two volumes entitled "Tales and Sketches by a Cosmopolite." The former was condemned (to use a gentle word) some years ago at the Park Theatre; and never was condemnation more religiously deserved. The latter are in so much more tolerable than the former, that they contain one non-execrable thing—"The Dapper Gentleman's Story"—in manner, as in title, an imitation of one of Irving's "Tales of a Traveller."

I mention Mr. L., however, not on account of his literary labors, but because, although a Scotchman, he has always professed to have greatly at heart the welfare of American letters. He is much in the society of authors and booksellers, converses fluently, tells a good story, is of social habits, and, with no taste whatever, is quite enthusiastic on all topics appertaining to Taste.

CAROLINE M. KIRKLAND

MRS. KIRKLAND'S "New Home," published under the *nom de plume* of "Mary Clavers," wrought an undoubted sensation. The cause lay not so much in picturesque description, in racy humor, or in animated individual portraiture, as in *truth* and novelty. The west at the time was a field comparatively untrodden by the sketcher or the novelist. In certain works, to be sure, we had obtained brief glimpses of character strange to us sojourners in the civilized east, but to Mrs. Kirkland alone we were indebted for our acquaintance with the *home* and home-life of the backwoodsman. With a fidelity and vigor that prove her pictures to be taken from the very life, she has represented "scenes" that could have occurred only *as* and *where* she has described them. She has placed before us the veritable settlers of the forest, with all their peculiarities, national and individual; their free and fearless spirit; their homely utilitarian views; their shrewd out-looking for self-interest; their thrifty care and inventions multiform; their coarseness of manner, united with real delicacy and substantial kindness when their sympathies are called into action—in a word, with all the characteristics of the Yankee, in a region where the salient points of character are unsmoothed by contact with society. So lifelike were her representations that they have been appropriated as individual portraits by many who have been disposed to plead, trumpet-tongued, against what they

supposed to be "the deep damnation of their taking-off."

"Forest Life" succeeded "A New Home," and was read with equal interest. It gives us, perhaps, more of the philosophy of western life, but has the same freshness, freedom, piquancy. Of course, a truthful picture of pioneer habits could never be given in any grave history or essay so well as in the form of narration, where each character is permitted to develop itself; narration, therefore, was very properly adopted by Mrs. Kirkland in both the books just mentioned, and even more entirely in her later volume, "Western Clearings." This is the title of a collection of tales, illustrative, in general, of Western manners, customs, ideas. "The Land Fever" is a story of the wild days when the madness of speculation in land was at its height. It is a richly characteristic sketch, as is also "The Ball at Thram's Huddle." Only those who have had the fortune to visit or live in the "back settlements" can enjoy such pictures to the full. "Chances and Changes" and "Love *vs.* Aristocracy" are more regularly constructed *tales*, with the "universal passion" as the moving power, but colored with the glowing hues of the west. "The Bee Tree" exhibits a striking but too numerous class among the settlers, and explains, also, the depth of the bitterness that grows out of an unprosperous condition in that "Paradise of the Poor." "Ambuscades" and "Half-Lengths from Life," I remember as two piquant sketches to which an annual, a year or two ago, was indebted for a most unusual sale among the conscious and pen-dreading denizens of the west. "Half-Lengths" turns on the trying subject of *caste*. "The Schoolmaster's Progress" is full of truth and humor. The western pedagogue, the stiff, solitary

nondescript figure in the drama of a new settlement, occupying a middle position between "our folks" and "company," and "boarding round," is irresistibly amusing, and cannot fail to be recognised as the representative of a class. The occupation, indeed, always seems to mould those engaged in it—they all soon, like Master Horner, learn to "know well what belongs to the pedagogical character, and that facial solemnity stands high on the list of indispensable qualifications." The spelling-school, also, is a "new country" feature which we owe Mrs. Kirkland many thanks for recording. The incidents of "An Embroidered Fact" are singular and picturesque, but not particularly illustrative of the "Clearings." The same may be said of "Bitter Fruits from Chance-Sown Seeds"; but this abounds in capital touches of character: all the horrors of the tale are brought about through suspicion of *pride*, an accusation as destructive at the west as that of witchcraft in olden times, or the cry of mad dog in modern.

In the way of absolute *books*, Mrs. Kirkland, I believe, has achieved nothing beyond the three volumes specified, (with another lately issued by Wiley and Putnam,) but she is a very constant contributor to the magazines. Unquestionably, she is one of our best writers, has a province of her own, and in that province has few equals. Her most noticeable trait is a certain *freshness* of style, seemingly drawn, as her subjects in general, from the west. In the second place is to be observed a species of *wit*, approximating humor, and so interspersed with pure *fun*, that "wit," after all, is nothing like a definition of it. To give an example—"Old Thoughts on the New Year" commences with a quotation from Tasso's "Aminta:"—

Il mondo invecchia
E invecchiando intristisce;

and the following is given as a "free translation":—

The world is growing older
And wiser day by day;
Everybody knows beforehand
What you're going to say.
We used to laugh and frolic—
Now we must behave:
Poor old Fun is dead and buried—
Pride dug his grave.

This, if I am not mistaken, is the only specimen of *poetry* as yet given by Mrs. Kirkland to the world. She has afforded us no means of judging in respect to her inventive powers, although fancy, and even imagination, are apparent in everything she does. Her perceptive faculties enable her to *describe* with great verisimilitude. Her mere style is admirable, lucid, terse, full of variety, faultlessly pure, and yet bold—so bold as to appear heedless of the ordinary *decora* of composition. In even her most reckless sentences, however, she betrays the woman of refinement, of accomplishment, of unusually thorough education. There are a great many points in which her general manner resembles that of Willis, whom she evidently admires. Indeed, it would not be difficult to pick out from her works an occasional Willisism, not less palpable than happy. For example—

Peaches were like little green velvet buttons when George was first mistaken for Doctor Beaseley, and *before they were ripe* he, &c.

And again—

Mr. Hammond is fortunately settled in our neighborhood, for the present at least; and he has the neatest little cottage in the world, standing, too, under a very tall oak, which

bends kindly over it, looking like the Princess Glumdalclitch inclining her ear to the box which contained her pet Gulliver.

Mrs. Kirkland's personal manner is an echo of her literary one. She is frank, cordial, yet sufficiently dignified—even bold, yet especially ladylike; converses with remarkable accuracy as well as fluency; is brilliantly witty, and now and then not a little sarcastic, but a general amiability prevails.

She is rather above the medium height; eyes and hair dark; features somewhat small, with no marked characteristics, but the whole countenance beams with benevolence and intellect.

PROSPER M. WETMORE

GENERAL WETMORE occupied some years ago quite a conspicuous position among the *littérateurs* of New York city. His name was seen very frequently in "The Mirror," and in other similar journals, in connexion with brief poems and occasional prose compositions. His only publication in volume form, I believe, is "The Battle of Lexington and other Poems," a collection of considerable merit, and one which met a very cordial reception from the press.

Much of this cordiality, however, is attributable to the personal popularity of the man, to his facility in making acquaintances, and his tact in converting them into unwavering friends.

General Wetmore has an exhaustless fund of *vitality*. His energy, activity and indefatigability are proverbial, not less than his peculiar sociability. These qualities give him unusual influence among his fellow-citizens, and have constituted him (as precisely the same traits have constituted his friend General Morris,) one of a standing committee for the regulation of a certain class of city affairs—such, for instance, as the getting up a complimentary benefit, or a public demonstration of respect for some deceased worthy, or a ball and dinner to Mr. Irving or Mr. Dickens.

Mr. Wetmore is not only a General, but Naval Officer of the Port of New York, Member of the Board of Trade, one of the Council of the Art Union, one of the Corresponding Committee of the Histori-

cal Society, and of more other committees than I can just now remember. His manners are *recherchés*, courteous—a little in the old school way. He is sensitive, punctilious; speaks well, roundly, fluently, plausibly, and is skilled in pouring oil upon the waters of stormy debate.

He is, perhaps, fifty years of age, but has a youthful look; is about five feet eight in height, slender, neat, with an air of military compactness; looks especially well on horseback.

EMMA C. EMBURY

MRS. EMBURY is one of the most noted, and certainly one of the most meritorious of our female *littérateurs*. She has been many years before the public—her earliest compositions, I believe, having been contributed to the "New York Mirror" under the *nom de plume* "Ianthe." They attracted very general attention at the time of their appearance and materially aided the paper. They were subsequently, with some other pieces, published in volume form, with the title "Guido and other Poems." The book has been long out of print. Of late days its author has written but little poetry—that little, however, has at least indicated a poetic capacity of no common order.

Yet as a poetess she is comparatively unknown, her reputation in this regard having been quite overshadowed by that which she has acquired as a writer of tales. In this latter capacity she has, upon the whole, no equal among her sex in America —certainly no superior. She is not so vigorous as Mrs. Stephens, nor so vivacious as Miss Chubbuck, nor so caustic as Miss Leslie, nor so dignified as Miss Sedgwick, nor so graceful, fanciful and *spirituelle* as Mrs. Osgood, but is *deficient* in none of the qualities for which these ladies are noted, and in certain particulars surpasses them all. Her subjects are *fresh*, if not always vividly original, and she manages them with more skill than is usually exhibited by our magazinists. She has

also much imagination and sensibility, while her style is pure, earnest, and devoid of verbiage and exaggeration. I make a point of *reading* all tales to which I see the name of Mrs. Embury appended. The story by which she has attained most reputation is "Constance Latimer, the Blind Girl."

Mrs. E. is a daughter of Doctor Manly, an eminent physician of New York city. At an early age she married a gentleman of some wealth and of education, as well as of tastes akin to her own. She is noted for her domestic virtues no less than for literary talents and acquirements.

She is about the medium height; complexion, eyes, and hair, light; arched eyebrows; Grecian nose; the mouth a fine one, and indicative of firmness; the whole countenance pleasing, intellectual, and expressive. The portrait in "Graham's Magazine" for January, 1843, has no resemblance to her whatever.

EPES SARGENT

MR. SARGENT is well known to the public as the author of "Velasco, a Tragedy," "The Light of the Light-house, with other Poems," one or two short *nouvelettes*, and numerous contributions to the periodicals. He was also the editor of "Sargent's Magazine," a monthly work, which had the misfortune of falling between two stools, never having been able to make up its mind whether to be popular with the three or dignified with the five dollar journals. It was a "happy *medium*" between the two classes, and met the fate of all happy *media* in dying, as well through lack of foes as of friends. *In medio tutissimus ibis* is the worst advice in the world for the editor of a magazine. Its observance proved the downfall of Mr. Lowell and his really meritorious "Pioneer."

"Velasco" has received some words of commendation from the author of "Ion," and I am ashamed to say, owes most of its home appreciation to this circumstance. Mr. Talfourd's play has, itself, little truly dramatic, with much picturesque and more poetical value; its author, nevertheless, is better entitled to respect as a dramatist than as a critic of dramas. "Velasco," compared with American tragedies generally, is a good tragedy—indeed, an excellent one, but, positively considered, its merits are very inconsiderable. It has many of the traits of Mrs. Mowatt's "Fashion," to which, in its mode of construction, its scenic effects, and several other points, it bears as close a resemblance

as, in the nature of things, it could very well bear. It is by no means improbable, however, that Mrs. Mowatt received some assistance from Mr. Sargent in the composition of her comedy, or at least was guided by his advice in many particulars of technicality.

"Shells and Sea Weeds," a series of brief poems, recording the incidents of a voyage to Cuba, is, I think, the best work in verse of its author, and evinces a fine fancy, with keen appreciation of the beautiful in natural scenery. Mr. Sargent is fond of sea-pieces, and paints them with skill, flooding them with that warmth and geniality which are their character and their due. "A Life on the Ocean Wave" has attained great popularity, but is by no means so good as the less lyrical compositions, "A Calm," "The Gale," "Tropical Weather," and "A Night Storm at Sea."

"The Light of the Light-house" is a spirited poem, with many musical and fanciful passages, well expressed. For example—

> But, oh, Aurora's crimson light,
> That makes the watch-fire dim,
> Is not a more transporting sight
> Than Ellen is to him.
> He pineth not for fields and brooks
> Wild flowers and singing birds,
> For summer smileth in her looks
> And singeth in her words.

There is something of the Dibdin spirit throughout the poem, and, indeed, throughout all the sea poems of Mr. Sargent—a little *too much* of it, perhaps.

His prose is not quite so meritorious as his poetry. He writes "easily," and is apt at burlesque and sarcasm—both rather broad than original. Mr. Sargent has an excellent memory for good *hits*, and

no little dexterity in their application. To those who meddle little with books, some of his satirical papers must appear brilliant. In a word, he is one of the most prominent members of a very extensive American family—the men of industry, talent and tact.

In stature he is short—not more than five feet five—but well proportioned. His face is a fine one; the features regular and expressive. His demeanor is very gentlemanly. Unmarried, and about thirty years of age.

FRANCES SARGENT OSGOOD

MRS. OSGOOD, for the last three or four years, has been rapidly attaining distinction; and this, evidently, with no effort at attaining it. She seems, in fact, to have no object in view beyond that of giving voice to the fancies or the feelings of the moment. "Necessity," says the proverb, "is the mother of Invention"; and the invention of Mrs. O., at least, springs plainly from necessity—from the necessity of invention. *Not* to write poetry—not to act it, think it, dream it, and be it, is entirely out of her power.

It may be questioned whether with more industry, more method, more definite purpose, more ambition, Mrs. Osgood would have made a more decided impression on the public mind. She might, upon the whole, have written better poems; but the chances are that she would have failed in conveying so vivid and so just an idea of her powers as a poet. The warm *abandonnement* of her style—that charm which now so captivates—is but a portion and a consequence of her unworldly nature—of her disregard of mere fame; but it affords us glimpses, which we could not otherwise have obtained, of a capacity for accomplishing what she has not accomplished, and in all probability never will. In the world of poetry, however, there is already more than enough of uncongenial ambition and pretence.

Mrs. Osgood has taken no care whatever of her literary fame. A great number of her finest compositions, both in verse and prose, have been written

anonymously, and are now lying *perdus* about the country, in out-of-the-way nooks and corners. Many a goodly reputation has been reared upon a far more unstable basis than her unclaimed and uncollected "fugitive pieces."

Her first volume, I believe, was published, seven or eight years ago, by Edward Churton, of London, during the residence of the poetess in that city. I have now lying before me a second edition of it, dated 1842—a beautifully printed book, dedicated to the Reverend Hobard Caunter. It contains a number of what the Bostonians call "juvenile" poems, written when Mrs. O., (then Miss Locke,) could not have been more than thirteen, and evincing unusual precocity. The leading piece is "Elfrida, a Dramatic Poem," but in many respects well entitled to the appellation, "drama." I allude chiefly to the passionate expression of particular portions, to delineation of character, and to occasional scenic effect:—in construction, or plot—in general conduct and plausibility, the play fails; comparatively, of course—for the hand of genius is evinced throughout.

The story is the well known one of Edgar, Elfrida, and Earl Athelwood. The king, hearing of Elfrida's extraordinary beauty, commissions his favorite, Athelwood, to visit her and ascertain if report speaks truly of her charms. The earl, becoming himself enamored, represents the lady as anything but beautiful or agreeable. The king is satisfied. Athelwood soon afterward woos and weds Elfrida—giving Edgar to understand that the heiress' wealth is the object. The true state of the case, however, is betrayed by an enemy; and the monarch resolves to visit the earl at his castle and to judge for himself. Hearing of this resolve, Athelwood, in despair,

confesses to his wife his duplicity, and entreats her to render null as far as possible the effect of her charms by dressing with unusual plainness. This the wife promises to do; but, fired with ambition and resentment at the wrong done her, arrays herself in her most magnificent and becoming costume. The king is charmed, and the result is the destruction of Athelwood and the elevation of Elfrida to the throne.

These incidents are well adapted to dramatic purposes, and with more of that art which Mrs. Osgood does *not* possess, she might have woven them into a tragedy which the world would not willingly let die. As it is, she has merely succeeded in showing what she might, should, and could have done, and yet, unhappily, did not.

The character of Elfrida is the bright point of the play. Her beauty and consciousness of it—her indignation and uncompromising ambition—are depicted with power. There is a fine blending of the poetry of passion and the passion of poetry, in the lines which follow:

——Why even now he bends
In courtly reverence to some mincing dame,
Haply the star of Edgar's festival,
While I, with this high heart and queenly form,
Pine in neglect and solitude. Shall it *be?*
Shall I not rend my fetters and be free?
Ay!—be the cooing turtle-dove content,
Safe in her own loved nest!—the eagle soars
On restless plumes to meet the imperial sun.
And Edgar is my day-star in whose light
This heart's proud wings shall yet be furled to rest.
Why wedded I with Athelwood? For this?
No!—even at the altar when I stood—
My hand in his, his gaze upon my cheek—
I did forget his presence and the scene;

A gorgeous vision rose before mine eyes
Of power and pomp and regal pageantry;
A king was at my feet and, as he knelt,
I smiled and, turning, met—a husband's kiss.
But still I smiled—for in my guilty soul
I blessed him as the being by whose means
I should be brought within my idol's sphere—
My haughty, glorious, brave, impassioned Edgar!
Well I remember when these wondering eyes
Beheld him first. I was a maiden then—
A dreaming child—but from that thrilling hour
I've been a queen in visions!

Very similar, but even more glowing, is the love-inspired eloquence of Edgar.

Earth hath no language, love, befitting thee,
For its own children it hath pliant speech;
And mortals know to call a blossom fair,
A wavelet graceful, and a jewel rich;
But thou!—oh, teach me, sweet, the angel tongue
They talked in Heaven ere thou didst leave its bowers
To bloom below!

To this Elfrida replies—

If Athelwood should hear thee!

And to this, Edgar—

Name not the felon knave to me, Elfrida!
My soul is flame whene'er I think of him.
Thou lovest him not?—oh, *say* thou dost not love him!

The answer of Elfrida at this point is profoundly true to nature, and would alone suffice to assure any critic of Mrs. Osgood's dramatic talent.

When but a child I saw thee in my dreams!

The woman's soul here shrinks from the direct avowal of want of love for her husband, and flies to poetry and appeals to fate by way of excusing that infidelity which is at once her glory and her shame.

In general, the "situations" of "Elfrida" are improbable or ultra-romantic, and its incidents unconsequential, seldom furthering the business of the play. The *dénouement* is feeble, and its moral of very equivocal tendency indeed—but I have already shown that it is the especial office neither of poetry nor of the drama, to inculcate truth, unless incidentally. Mrs. Osgood, however, although she has unquestionably failed in writing a good play, has, even in failing, given indication of dramatic power. The great tragic element, passion, breathes in every line of her composition, and had she but the art, or the patience, to model or control it, she might be eminently successful as a playwright. I am justified in these opinions not only by "Elfrida," but by "Woman's Trust, a Dramatic Sketch," included, also, in the English edition.

A Masked Ball. Madelon and a Stranger in a Recess.

Mad.—Why hast thou led me here?
My friends may deem it strange—unmaidenly,
This lonely converse with an unknown mask.
Yet in thy voice there is a thrilling power
That makes me love to linger. It is like
The tone of one far distant—only his
Was gayer and more soft
Strang. Sweet Madelon,
Say thou wilt smile upon the passionate love
That thou alone canst waken! Let me hope!

Mad.—Hush! hush! I may not hear thee. Know'st thou not
I am betrothed?
Strang.—Alas! too well I know;
But I could tell thee such a tale of him—
Thine early love—'twould fire those timid eyes
With lightning pride and anger—curl that lip—
That gentle lip to passionate contempt
For man's light falsehood. Even now he bends—
Thy Rupert bends o'er one as fair as thou,

In fond affection. Even now his heart—
Mad.—Doth my eye flash?—doth my lip curl with scorn?
'Tis scorn of thee, thou perjured stranger, not—
Oh, not of him, the generous and the true!
Hast thou e'er seen my Rupert?—hast thou met
Those proud and fearless eyes that never quailed,
As Falsehood quails, before another's glance—
As thine even now are shrinking from mine own—
The spirit beauty of that open brow—
The noble head—the free and gallant step—
The lofty mein whose majesty is won
From inborn honor—hast thou seen all this?
And darest thou speak of faithlessness and him
In the same idle breath? Thou little know'st
The strong confiding of a woman's heart,
When woman loves as—I do. Speak no more!
Strang.—Deluded girl! I tell thee he is false—
False as yon fleeting cloud!
Mad. True as the sun!
Strang.—The very wind less wayward than his heart!
Mad.—The forest oak less firm! He loved me not
For the frail rose-hues and the fleeting light
Of youthful loveliness—ah, many a cheek
Of softer bloom, and many a dazzling eye
More rich than mine may win my wanderer's gaze.
He loved me for my love, the deep, the fond—
For my unfaltering truth; he cannot find—
Rove where he will—a heart that beats for him
With such intense, absorbing tenderness—
Such idolizing constancy as mine.
Why should he change, then?—I am still the same.
Strang.—Sweet infidel! *wilt* thou have ruder proof?
Rememberest thou a little golden case
Thy Rupert wore, in which a gem was shrined?
A gem I would not barter for a world—
An angel face; its *sunny wealth of hair*
In radiant ripples bathed the graceful throat
And dimpled shoulders; round the rosy curve
Of the sweet mouth a smile seemed wandering ever;
While in the depths of azure fire that gleamed
Beneath the drooping lashes, slept a world
Of eloquent meaning, passionate yet pure—
Dreamy—subdued—but oh, how beautiful!

A look of timid, pleading tenderness
That should have been a talisman to charm
His restless heart for aye. Rememberest thou?
Mad.—(*impatiently.*) I do—I do remember—'twas my own
He prized it as his life—I gave it him—
What of it!—speak!
Strang.—(*showing a miniature,*) Lady, behold that gift!
Mad.—(*clasping her hands*) Merciful Heaven! is my Rupert dead?
(*After a pause, during which she seems overwhelmed with agony*)
How died he?—when?—oh, *thou* wast by his side
In that last hour and *I* was far away!
My blessed love!—give me that token!—speak!
What message sent he to his Madelon?
Strang.—(*Supporting her and strongly agitated,*)
He is not dead, dear lady!—grieve not thus!
Mad.—He is not false, sir stranger!
Strang. For thy sake,
Would he were worthier! One other proof
I'll give thee, loveliest! if thou lov'st him still,
I'll not believe thee woman. Listen, then!
A faithful lover breathes not of his bliss
To other ears. Wilt hear a fable, lady?

Here the stranger details some incidents of the first wooing of Madelon by Rupert, and concludes with,

> Lady, my task is o'er—dost doubt me still?
> *Mad. Doubt thee, my Rupert! ah, I know thee now.*
> Fling by that hateful mask!—let me unclasp it!
> No! thou wouldst *not* betray thy Madelon.

The "Miscellaneous Poems" of the volume—many of them written in childhood—are, of course, various in character and merit. "The Dying Rosebud's Lament," although by no means one of the best, will very well serve to show the earlier and most characteristic manner of the poetess:

Ah, me!—ah wo is me
That I should perish now,
With the dear sunlight just let in
Upon my balmy brow.

My leaves, instinct with glowing life,
Were quivering to unclose:
My happy heart with love was rife—
I was almost a rose.

Nerved by a hope, warm, rich, intense,
Already I had risen
Above my cage's curving fence—
My green and graceful prison.

My pouting lips, by Zephyr pressed,
Were just prepared to part,
And whispered to the wooing wind
The rapture of my heart.

In new-born fancies revelling,
My mossy cell half riven,
Each thrilling leaflet seemed a wing
To bear me into Heaven.

How oft, while yet *an infant-flower,*
My crimson cheek I've laid
Against the green bars of my bower,
Impatient of the shade.

And, pressing up and peeping through
Its small but precious vistas,
Sighed for the lovely light and dew
That blessed my elder sisters.

I saw the *sweet breeze rippling* o'er
Their leaves that loved the play,
Though the light thief stole all the store
Of dew-drop gems away.

I thought how happy I should be
Such diamond wreaths to wear,
And frolic with a rose's glee
With sunbeam, bird and air.

Ah, me!—ah, wo is me, that I,
Ere yet my leaves unclose,
With all my wealth of sweets *must die*
Before I am a rose!

The poetical reader will agree with me that few things have ever been written (by any poet, at any age,) more delicately fanciful than the passages italicized—and yet they are the work of a girl not more than fourteen years of age. The clearness and force of expression, and the nice appositeness of the overt and insinuated meaning, are, when we consider the youth of the writer, even more remarkable than the fancy.

I cannot speak of Mrs. Osgood's poems without a strong propensity to ring the changes upon the indefinite word "grace" and its derivatives. About everything she writes we perceive this indescribable charm—of which, perhaps, the elements are a vivid fancy and a quick sense of the proportionate. Grace, however, may be most satisfactorily defined as "a term applied, in despair, to that class of the impressions of Beauty which admit of no analysis." It is in this irresoluble effect that Mrs. Osgood excels any poetess of her country—and it is to this easily appreciable effect that her *popularity* is owing. Nor is she more graceful herself than a lover of the graceful, under whatever guise it is presented to her consideration. The sentiment renders itself manifest, in innumerable instances, as well throughout her prose as her poetry. Whatever be her theme, she at once *extorts* from it its whole essentiality of *grace*. Fanny Ellsler has been often lauded; true poets have sung her praises; but we look in vain for anything written about her, which so distinctly and vividly paints her to the eye as the half dozen

quatrains which follow. They are to be found in the English volume:

She comes!—the spirit of the dance!
And but for those large eloquent eyes,
Where passion speaks in every glance,
She'd seem a wanderer from the skies.

So light that, *gazing breathless there,*
Lest the celestial dream should go,
You'd think the music in the air
Waved the fair vision to and fro.

Or think the melody's sweet flow
Within the radiant creature played,
And those soft wreathing arms of snow
And white sylph feet the music made.

Now gliding slow with dreamy grace,
Her eyes beneath their lashes lost,
Now motionless, with lifted face,
And small hands on her bosom crossed.

And now with flashing eyes she springs—
Her whole bright figure raised in air,
As if her soul had spread its wings
And poised her one wild instant there!

She spoke not—but, so richly fraught
With language are her glance and smile
That, when the curtain fell, I thought
She had been talking all the while.

This is, indeed, poetry—and of the most unquestionable kind—poetry *truthful* in the proper sense—that is to say, breathing of Nature. There is here nothing forced or artificial—no hardly sustained enthusiasm. The poetess speaks because she feels, and *what* she feels; but then what she feels is felt only by the truly poetical. The thought in the last line of the quatrain will not be so fully appreciated

by the reader as it should be; for latterly it has been imitated, plagiarized, repeated *ad infinitum*:—but the other passages italicized have still left them all their original effect. The idea in the last two lines is exquisitely *näive* and natural; that in the last two lines of the second quatrain, beautiful beyond measure; that of the whole fifth quatrain, *magnificent*—unsurpassed in the entire compass of American poetry. It is instinct with the noblest poetical requisite—imagination.

Of the same trait I find, to my surprise, one of the best exemplifications among the "Juvenile Rhymes."

> For Fancy is a fairy that can hear,
> Ever, the melody of Nature's voice
> And see all lovely visions that she will.
> She drew *a picture of a beauteous bird*
> *With plumes of radiant green and gold inwoven,*
> *Banished from its beloved resting place,*
> *And fluttering in vain hope from tree to tree,*
> *And bade us think how, like it, the sweet season*
> *From one bright shelter to another fled—*
> *First from the maple waved her emerald pinions,*
> *But lingered still upon the oak and elm,*
> *Till, frightened by rude breezes even from them,*
> *With mournful sigh she moaned her sad farewell.*

The little poem called "The Music Box" has been as widely circulated as any of Mrs Osgood's compositions. The melody and harmony of this *jeu d'esprit* are perfect, and there is in it a rich tint of that epigrammatism for which the poetess is noted. Some of the *intentional* epigrams interspersed through the works are peculiarly happy. Here is one which, while replete with the rarest "spirit of point," is yet something more than pointed.

TO AN ATHEIST POET

Lovest thou the music of the sea?
Callest thou the sunshine bright?
His voice is more than melody—
His smile is more than light.

Here again, is something very similar:

Fanny shuts her smiling eyes,
Then because she cannot see,
Thoughtless simpleton! she cries
"Ah! you can't see me."

Fanny's like the sinner vain
Who, with spirit shut and dim,
Thinks, because he sees not Heaven,
Heaven beholds not him.

Is it not a little surprising, however, that a writer capable of so much precision and finish as the author of these epigrams *must* be, should have failed to see how much of force is lost in the inversion of "the sinner vain?" Why not have written "Fanny's like the silly sinner?"—or, if "silly" be thought too jocose, "the blinded sinner?" The rhythm, at the same time, would thus be much improved by bringing the lines,

Fanny's like the silly sinner,
Thinks because he sees not Heaven,

into *exact* equality.

In mingled epigrams and *espieglerie* Mrs. Osgood is even more especially at home. I have seldom seen anything in this way more happily done than the song entitled "*If he can.*"

"The Unexpected Declaration" is, perhaps, even a finer specimen of the same manner. It is one of that class of compositions which Mrs. Osgood has

made almost exclusively her own. Had I seen it without her name, I should have had no hesitation in ascribing it to her; for there is no other person—in America certainly—who does anything of a similar kind with anything like a similar piquancy.

The point of this poem, however, might have been sharpened, and the polish increased in lustre, by the application of the emory of brevity. From what the lover says much might well have been omitted; and I should have preferred leaving out altogether the autorial comments; for the story is fully told without them. The "Why do you weep?" "Why do you frown?" and "Why do you smile?" supply all the imagination requires; to supply *more* than it requires, oppresses and offends it. Nothing more deeply grieves it—or more vexes the true taste in general, than *hyperism* of any kind. In Germany, *Wohlgeborn* is a loftier title than *Edelgeborn;* and in Greece, the thrice-victorious at the Olympic games could claim a statue of the size of life, while he who had conquered but once was entitled *only* to a colossal one.

The English collection of which I speak was entitled "A Wreath of Wild Flowers from New England." It met with a *really* cordial reception in Great Britain—was favorably noticed by the "Literary Gazette," "Times," "Atlas," "Monthly Chronicle," and especially by the "Court Journal," "The Court and Ladies' Magazine," "La Belle Assemblée," and other similar works. "We have long been familiar," says the high authority of the "Literary Gazette," "with the name of our fair author. . . . . Our expectations have been fulfilled, and we have here a delightful gathering of the sweetest of wild flowers, all looking as fresh and beautiful as if they had grown in the richest

of English pasture in place of having been 'nursed by the cataract.' True, the wreath might have been improved with a little more care—a trifling attention or two paid to the formation of it. A stalk here and there that obtrudes itself between the bells of the flowers, might have become so interwoven as to have been concealed, and the whole have looked as if it had grown in that perfect and beautiful form. Though, after all, we are perhaps too chary; for in Nature every leaf is not ironed out to a form, nor propped up with a wiry precision, but blown and ruffled by the refreshing breezes, and looking as careless and easy and unaffected as a child that bounds along with its silken locks tossed to and fro just as the wind uplifts them. Page after page of this volume have we perused with a feeling of pleasure and admiration." The "Court Journal" more emphatically says:—"Her wreath is one of violets, sweet-scented, pure and modest; so lovely that the hand that wove it should not neglect additionally to enrich it by turning her love and kindness to things of larger beauty. Some of the smaller lyrics in the volume are *perfectly* beautiful —beautiful in their chaste and exquisite simplicity and the perfect elegance of their composition." In fact, there was *that* about "The Wreath of Wild Flowers"—that inexpressible *grace* of thought and manner—which never fails to find ready echo in the hearts of the aristocracy and refinement of Great Britain;—and it was here especially that Mrs. Osgood found welcome. Her husband's merits as an artist had already introduced her into distinguished society, (she was petted, in especial, by Mrs. Norton and Rogers,) but the publication of her poems had at once an evidently favorable effect upon his fortunes. His pictures were placed in a

most advantageous light by her poetical and conversational ability.

Messrs. Clarke and Austin, of New York, have lately issued another, but still a very uncomplete collection of "Poems by Frances S. Osgood." In general, it includes by no means the best of her works. "The Daughter of Herodias"—one of her longest compositions, and a very noble poem, putting me in mind of the best efforts of Mrs. Hemans—is omitted:—it is included, however, in the last edition of Doctor Griswold's "Poets and Poetry of America." In Mrs. C. and A.'s collection there occur, too, very many of those half sentimental, half allegorical compositions of which, at one period, the authoress seemed to be particularly fond—for the reason, perhaps, that they afforded her good opportunity for the exercise of her ingenuity and epigrammatic talent:—no poet, however, can admit them to be poetry at all. Still, the volume contains some pieces which enable us to take a new view of the powers of the writer. A few additional years, with their inevitable sorrow, appear to have stirred the depths of her *heart*. We see less of frivolity—less of vivacity—more of tenderness—earnestness—even passion—and far more of the true imagination as distinguished from its subordinate, fancy. The one prevalent trait, *grace*, alone distinctly remains. "The Spirit of Poetry," "To Sybil," "The Birth of the Callitriche," and "The Child and its Angel-Playmate," would do honor to any of our poets. "She Loves Him Yet," nevertheless, will serve, better than either of these poems, to show the alteration of manner referred to. It is not only rythmically perfect, but it evinces much originality in its structure. The verses commencing, "Yes, lower to the level," are in a somewhat similar tone,

but are more noticeable for their terse energy of expression.

In not presenting to the public at one view all that she has written in verse, Mrs. Osgood has incurred the risk of losing that credit to which she is entitled on the score of versatility—of variety in invention and expression. There is scarcely a form of poetical composition in which she has not made experiment; and there is none in which she has not very happily succeeded. Her defects are chiefly negative and by no means numerous. Her versification is sometimes exceedingly good, but more frequently feeble through the use of harsh consonants, and such words as "*thou'dst*" for "*thou wouldst*," with other unnecessary contractions, inversions, and obsolete expressions. Her imagery is often mixed;—indeed it is rarely otherwise. The epigrammatism of her conclusions gives to her poems, as wholes, the air of being more skilfully constructed than they really are. On the other hand, we look in vain throughout her works for an offence against the finer taste, or against decorum —for a low thought or a platitude. A happy refinement—an instinct of the pure and delicate—is one of her most noticeable excellencies. She may be properly commended, too, for originality of poetic invention, whether in the conception of a theme or in the manner of treating it. Consequences of this trait are her point and piquancy. Fancy and *näiveté* appear in all she writes. Regarding the loftier merits, I am forced to speak of her in more measured terms. She has occasional passages of true imagination—but scarcely the glowing, vigorous, and *sustained* ideality of Mrs. Maria Brooks—or even, in general, the less ethereal elevation of Mrs. Welby. In that indescribable something, however,

which, for want of a more definite term, we are accustomed to call "grace"—that charm so magical, because at once so shadowy and so potent—that Will o' the Wisp which, in its *supreme* development, may be said to involve nearly *all* that is valuable in poetry—she has, unquestionably, no rival among her countrywomen.

Of pure prose—of prose proper—she has, perhaps, never written a line in her life. Her usual magazine papers are a class by themselves. She begins with a resolute effort at being sedate—that is to say, sufficiently prosaic and matter-of-fact for the purpose of a legend or an essay; but, after a few sentences, we behold uprising the leaven of the Muse; then, with a flourish and some vain attempts at repression, a scrap of verse renders itself manifest, then comes a little poem outright; then another and another and another, with impertinent patches of prose in between—until at length the mask is thrown fairly off and far away, and the whole article—sings.

Upon the whole, I have spoken of Mrs. Osgood so much in detail, less on account of what she has actually done than on account of what I perceive in her the ability to do.

In character she is ardent, sensitive, impulsive—the very soul of truth and honor; a worshipper of the beautiful, with a heart so radically artless as to seem abundant in art; universally admired, respected, and beloved. In person, she is about the medium height, slender even to fragility, graceful whether in action or repose; complexion usually pale; hair black and glossy; eyes a clear, luminous grey, large, and with singular capacity for expression.

LYDIA M. CHILD

MRS. CHILD has acquired a just celebrity by many compositions of high merit, the most noticeable of which are "Hobomok," "Philothea," and a "History of the Condition of Women." "Philothea," in especial, is written with great vigor, and, as a classical romance, is not far inferior to the "Anacharsis" of Barthelemi;—its style is a model for purity, chastity, and ease. Some of her magazine papers are distinguished for graceful and brilliant *imagination*—a quality rarely noticed in our countrywomen. She continues to write a great deal for the monthlies and other journals, and invariably writes well. Poetry she has not often attempted, but I make no doubt that in this she would excel. It seems, indeed, the legitimate province of her fervid and fanciful nature. I quote one of her shorter compositions, as well to instance (from the subject) her intense appreciation of genius in others as to exemplify the force of her poetic expression:—

MARIUS AMID THE RUINS OF CARTHAGE.

Pillars are fallen at thy feet,
  Fanes quiver in the air,
A prostrate city is thy seat,
  And thou alone art there.

No change comes o'er thy noble brow,
  Though ruin is around thee;
Thine eyebeam burns as proudly now
  As when the laurel crowned thee.

It cannot bend thy lofty soul
Though friends and fame depart—
The car of Fate may o'er thee roll
Nor crush thy Roman heart.

And genius hath electric power
Which earth can never tame;
Bright suns may scorch and dark clouds lower,
Its flash is still the same.

The dreams we loved in early life
May melt like mist away;
High thoughts may seem, 'mid passion's strife,
Like Carthage in decay;

And proud hopes in the human heart
May be to ruin hurled,
Like mouldering monuments of art
Heaped on a sleeping world;

Yet there is something will not die
Where life hath once been fair;
Some towering thoughts still rear on high,
Some Roman lingers there.

Mrs. Child, casually observed, has nothing particularly striking in her personal appearance. One would pass her in the street a dozen times without notice. She is low in stature and slightly framed. Her complexion is florid; eyes and hair are dark; features in general diminutive. The expression of her countenance, when animated, is highly intellectual. Her dress is usually plain, not even neat—anything but fashionable. Her bearing needs excitement to impress it with life and dignity. She is of that order of beings who are themselves only on "great occasions." Her husband is still living. She has no children. I need scarcely add that she has always been distinguished for her energetic and active philanthropy.

THOMAS DUNN BROWN

I HAVE seen one or two scraps of verse with this gentleman's *nom de plume** appended, which had considerable merit. For example:

A sound melodious shook the breeze
When thy beloved name was heard:
Such was the music in the word
Its dainty rhythm the pulses stirred
But passed forever joys like these.
There is no joy, no light, no day;
But black despair and night *al-way*
And thickening gloom:
And this, Azthene, is my doom.

Was it for this, for weary years,
I strove among the sons of men,
And by *the magic of my pen*—
Just sorcery—walked the lion's den
Of slander void of tears and fears—
And all for thee? For thee! alas,
As is the image on a glass
So baseless *seems*,
Azthene, all my early *dreams*.

I must confess, however, that I do not appreciate the "dainty rhythm" of such a word as "Azthene," and, perhaps, there is some taint of egotism in the passage about "the magic" of Mr. Brown's pen. Let us be charitable, however, and set all this down under the head of the pure imagination or invention —the first of poetical requisites. The *inexcusable*

*Thomas Dunn English.

sin of Mr. Brown is imitation—if this be not too mild a term. When Barry Cornwall, for example, sings about a "dainty rhythm," Mr. Brown forthwith, in B flat, hoots about it too. He has taken, however, his most unwarrantable liberties in the way of plagiarism, with Mr. Henry B. Hirst, of Philadelphia—a poet whose merits have not yet been properly estimated.

I place Mr. Brown, to be sure, on my list of literary people not on account of his poetry, (which I presume he himself is not weak enough to estimate very highly,) but on the score of his having edited, for several months, "with the aid of numerous collaborators," a magazine called "The Aristidean." This work, although professedly a "monthly," was issued at irregular intervals, and was unfortunate, I fear, in not attaining at any period more than about fifty subscribers.

Mr. Brown has at least that amount of talent which would enable him to succeed in his father's profession—that of a ferryman on the Schuylkill—but the fate of "The Aristidean" should indicate to him that, to prosper in any higher walk of life, he must apply himself to study. No spectacle can be more ludicrous than that of a man without the commonest school education, busying himself in attempts to instruct mankind on topics of polite literature. The absurdity, in such cases, does not lie merely in the ignorance displayed by the would-be instructor, but in the transparency of the shifts by which he endeavors to keep this ignorance concealed. The "editor of the Aristidean," for example, was not the public laughing-stock throughout the five months of his magazine's existence, so much on account of writing "lay" for "lie," "went" for "gone," "set" for "sit," etc., etc., or for coupling

nouns in the plural with verbs in the singular—as when he writes, above,

> ——so baseless *seems*,
> Azthene, all my earthly *dreams*—

he was not, I say, laughed at *so much* on account of his excusable deficiencies in English grammar (although an editor should undoubtedly be able to write *his own name*) as on account of the pertinacity with which he exposed his weakness, in lamenting the "typographical blunders" which so unluckily *would* creep into his work. He should have reflected that there is not in all America a proof-reader so blind as to permit *such* errors to escape him. The rhyme, for instance, in the matter of the "dreams" that "seems," would have distinctly shown even the most uneducated printers' devil that he, the devil, had no right to meddle with so obviously an *intentional* peculiarity.

Were I writing merely for American readers, I should not, of course, have introduced Mr. Brown's name in this book. With us, *grotesqueries* such as "The Aristidean" and its editor, are not altogether unparalleled, and are sufficiently well understood—but my purpose is to convey to foreigners some idea of a condition of literary affairs among us, which otherwise they might find it difficult to comprehend or to conceive. That Mr. Brown's blunders are really such as I have described them—that I have not distorted their character or exaggerated their grossness in any respect—that there existed in New York, for some months, as conductor of a magazine that called itself *the organ of the Tyler party*, and was even mentioned, at times, by respectable papers, a man who obviously *never went to school*, and was so profoundly ignorant as not to know that he could

not spell—are serious and positive facts—uncolored in the slightest degree—demonstrable, in a word, upon the spot, by reference to almost any editorial sentence upon any page of the magazine in question. But a single instance will suffice:—Mr. Hirst, in one of his poems, has the lines,

> Oh Odin! 'twas pleasure—'twas passion to see
> Her serfs sweep like wolves on a lambkin like me.

At page 200 of "The Aristidean" for September, 1845, Mr. Brown, commenting on the English of the passage, says:—"This lambkin might have used better language than '*like me*'—unless he intended it for a specimen of choice Choctaw, when it may, for all we know to the contrary, pass muster." It is needless, I presume, to proceed farther in a search for the most direct proof possible or conceivable, of the ignorance of Mr. Brown—who, in similar cases, invariably writes—"like I."

In an editorial announcement on page 242 of the same "number," he says:—"This and the three succeeding *numbers brings* the work up to January and with the two *numbers* previously published *makes* up a volume or half year of *numbers*." But enough of this absurdity:—Mr. Brown had, for the motto on his magazine cover, the words of Richelieu,

> ———Men call me cruel;
> I am not:—I am *just*.

Here the two monosyllables "an ass" should have been appended. They were no doubt omitted through "one of those d——d typographical blunders" which, through life, have been at once the bane and the antidote of Mr. Brown.

I make these remarks in no spirit of unkindness. Mr. B. is yet young—certainly not more than thirty-

eight or nine—and might readily improve himself at points where he is most defective. No one of any generosity would think the worse of him for getting private instruction.

I do not personally know him. About his appearance there is nothing very remarkable—except that he exists in a perpetual state of vacillation between mustachio and goatee. In character, a *windbeutel.*

ELIZABETH BOGART

MISS BOGART has been for many years before the public as a writer of poems and tales (principally the former) for the periodicals, having made her *debût* as a contributor to the original "New York Mirror." Doctor Griswold, in a foot-note appended to one of her poems quoted in his "Poets and Poetry," speaks of the "volume" from which he quotes; but Miss Bogart has not yet collected her writings in volume form. Her fugitive pieces have usually been signed "Estelle." They are noticeable for nerve, dignity and finish. Perhaps the four stanzas entitled "He came too Late," and introduced into Dr. Griswold's volume are the most favorable specimen of her manner. Had he not quoted them I should have copied them here.

Miss Bogart is a member of one of the oldest families in the State. An interesting sketch of her progenitors is to be found in Thompson's "History of Long Island." She is about the medium height, straight and slender; black hair and eyes; countenance full of vivacity and intelligence. She converses with fluency and spirit, enunciates distinctly, and exhibits interest in whatever is addressed to her—a rare quality in good talkers; has a keen appreciation of genius and of natural scenery; is cheerful and fond of society.

CATHERINE M. SEDGWICK

MISS SEDGWICK is not only one of our most celebrated and most meritorious writers, but attained reputation at a period when *American* reputation in letters was regarded as a phenomenon; and thus, like Irving, Cooper, Paulding, Bryant, Halleck, and one or two others, she is indebted, certainly, for *some* portion of the esteem in which she was and is held, to that patriotic pride and gratitude to which I have already alluded, and for which we must make reasonable allowance in estimating the absolute merit of our literary pioneers.

Her earlist published work of any length was "A New England Tale," designed in the first place as a religious tract, but expanding itself into a volume of considerable size. Its success—partially owing, perhaps, to the influence of the parties for whom or at whose instigation it was written—encouraged the author to attempt a novel of somewhat greater elaborateness as well as length, and "Redwood" was soon announced, establishing her at once as the first female prose writer of her country. It was reprinted in England, and translated, I believe, into French and Italian. "Hope Leslie" next appeared—also a novel—and was more favorably received even than its predecessors. Afterwards came "Clarence," not quite so successful, and then "The Linwoods," which took rank in the public esteem with "Hope Leslie." These are all of her longer prose fictions, but she has written numerous shorter

ones of great merit—such as "The Rich Poor Man and the Poor Rich Man," "Live and let Live," (both in volume form,) with various articles for the magazines and annuals, to which she is still an industrious contributor. About ten years since she published a compilation of several of her fugitive prose pieces, under the title "Tales and Sketches," and a short time ago a series of "Letters from Abroad"—not the least popular or least meritorious of her compositions.

Miss Sedgwick has now and then been nicknamed "the Miss Edgeworth of America"; but she has done nothing to bring down upon her the vengeance of so equivocal a title. That she has thoroughly studied and profoundly admired Miss Edgeworth may, indeed, be gleaned from her works—but what woman has not? Of imitation there is not the slightest perceptible taint. In both authors we observe the same tone of thoughtful morality, but here all resemblance ceases. In the Englishwoman there is far more of a certain Scotch prudence, in the American more of warmth, tenderness, sympathy for the weakness of her sex. Miss Edgeworth is the more acute, the more inventive, and the more rigid. Miss Sedgwick is the more womanly.

All her stories are full of interest. The "New England Tale" and "Hope Leslie" are especially so, but upon the whole I am best pleased with "The Linwoods." Its prevaling features are ease, purity of style, pathos, and verisimilitude. To plot it has little pretension. The scene is in America, and, as the sub-title indicates, "Sixty years since." This, by-the-by, is taken from "Waverley." The adventures of the family of a Mr. Linwood, a resident of New York, form the principal theme. The character of this gentleman is happily drawn, although

there is an antagonism between the initial and concluding touches—the end has forgotten the beginning, like the goverment of Trinculo. Mr. L. has two children, Herbert and Isabella. Being himself a Tory, the boyish impulses of his son in favor of the revolutionists are watched with anxiety and vexation; and on the breaking out of the war, Herbert, positively refusing to drink the king's health, is expelled from home by his father—an event on which hinges the main interest of the narrative. Isabella is the heroine proper, full of generous impulses, beautiful, intellectual, *spirituelle*—indeed, a most fascinating creature. But the family of a Widow Lee throws quite a charm over all the book—a matronly, pious and devoted mother, yielding up her son to the cause of her country—the son gallant, chivalrous, yet thoughtful; a daughter, gentle, loving, melancholy, and susceptible of light impressions. This daughter, Bessie Lee, is one of the most effective personations to be found in our fictitious literature, and may lay claims to the distinction of originality—no slight distinction where *character* is concerned. It is the old story, to be sure, of a meek and trusting heart broken by treachery and abandonment, but in the narration of Miss Sedgwick it breaks upon us with all the freshness of novel emotion. Deserted by her lover, an accomplished and aristocratical coxcomb, the spirits of the gentle girl sink gradually from trust to simple hope, from hope to anxiety, from anxiety to doubt, from doubt to melancholy, and from melancholy to madness. The gradation is depicted in a masterly manner. She escapes from her home in New England and endeavors to make her way alone to New York, with the object of restoring to him who had abandoned her, some tokens he had given her of his love—an act

which her disordered fancy assures her will effect in her own person a disenthralment from passion. Her piety, her madness, and her beauty, stand her in stead of the lion of Una, and she reaches the city in safety. In that portion of the narrative which embodies this journey are some passages which no mind unimbued with the purest spirit of poetry could have conceived, and they have often made me wonder why Miss Sedgwick has never written a poem.

I have already alluded to her usual excellence of style; but she has a very peculiar fault—that of discrepancy between the words and character of the speaker—the fault, indeed, more properly belongs to the depicting of character itself.

For example, at page 38, vol. 1, of "The Linwoods":—

"No more of my contempt for the Yankees, Hal, an' thou lovest me," replied Jasper. "You remember Æsop's advice to Crœsus at the Persian court?"

"No, I am sure I do not. You have the most provoking way of resting the lever by which you bring out your own knowledge, on your friend's ignorance."

Now all this is pointed, (although the last sentence would have been improved by letting the words "on your friend's ignorance" come immediately after "resting,") but it is by no means the language of schoolboys—and such are the speakers.

Again, at page 226, vol. 1, of the same novel:—

"Now, out on you, you lazy, slavish loons!" cried Rose. "Cannot you see these men are raised up to fight for freedom for more than themselves? If the chain be broken at one end, the links will fall apart sooner or later. When you see the sun on the mountain top, you may be sure it will shine into the deepest valleys before long."

Who would suppose this graceful eloquence to

proceed from the mouth of a negro woman? Yet such is Rose.

Again, at page 24, vol. 1, same novel:—

"True, I never saw her; but I tell you, young lad, that there is such a thing as seeing the shadow of things far distant and past, and never seeing the realities, though they it be that cast the shadows."

Here the speaker is an old woman who, a few sentences before, has been boasting of her proficiency in "*tellin' fortins*."

I might object, too, very decidedly to the vulgarity of such a phrase as "I put in my oar," (meaning, "I joined in the conversation,") when proceeding from the mouth of so well-bred a personage as Miss Isabella Linwood. There are, certainly, most remarkable inadvertences.

As the author of many *books*—of several absolutely bound volumes in the ordinary "novel" form of auld lang syne, Miss Sedgwick has a certain adventitious hold upon the attention of the public, a species of tenure that has nothing to do with literature proper—a very decided advantage, in short, over her more modern rivals whom fashion and the growing influence *of the want* of an international copyright law have condemned to the external insignificance of the yellow-backed pamphleteering.

We must permit, however, neither this advantage nor the more obvious one of her having been one of our *pioneers*, to bias the critical judgment as it makes estimate of her abilities in comparison with those of her *present* cotemporaries. She has neither the vigor of Mrs. Stephens nor the vivacious grace of Miss Chubbuck, nor the pure style of Mrs. Embury, nor the classic imagination of Mrs. Child, nor the naturalness of Mrs. Annan, nor the thoughtful and suggestive originality

of Miss Fuller; but in many of the qualities mentioned she excels, and in no one of them is she particularly deficient. She is an author of marked talent, but by no means of such decided genius as would entitle her to that precedence among our female writers which, under the circumstances to which I have alluded, *seems* to be yielded her by the voice of the public.

Strictly speaking, Miss Sedgwick is *not* one of the *literati* of New York city, but she passes here about half or rather more than half her time. Her home is Stockbridge, Massachusetts. Her family is one of the first in America. Her father, Theodore Sedgwick the elder, was an eminent jurist and descended from one of Cromwell's major-generals. Many of her relatives have distinguished themselves in various ways.

She is about the medium height, perhaps a little below it. Her forehead is an unusually fine one; nose of a slightly Roman curve; eyes dark and piercing; mouth well formed and remarkably pleasant in its expression. The portrait in "Graham's Magazine" is by no means a likeness, and, although the hair is represented as curled, (Miss Sedgwick at present wears a cap—at least most usually,) gives her the air of being much older than she is.

Her manners are those of a high-bred woman, but her ordinary *manner* vacillates, in a singular way, between cordiality and a reserve amounting to *hauteur*.

LEWIS GAYLORD CLARK

MR. CLARK is known principally as the twin brother of the late *Willis* Gaylord Clark, the poet, of Philadelphia, with whom he has often been confounded from similarity both of person and of name. He is known, also, within a more limited circle, as one of the editors of "The Knickerbocker Magazine," and it is in this latter capacity that I must be considered as placing him among literary people. He writes little himself, the editorial scraps which usually appear in fine type at the end of "The Knickerbocker" being the joint composition of a great variety of gentlemen (most of them possessing shrewdness and talent,) connected with diverse journals about the city of New York. It is only in some such manner, as might be supposed, that so amusing and so heterogeneous a medley of chit-chat could be put together. Were a little more pains taken in elevating the *tone* of this "Editors' Table," (which its best friends are forced to admit is at present a little Boweryish,) I should have no hesitation in commending it in general as a very creditable and very entertaining specimen of what may be termed easy writing and hard reading.

It is not, of course, to be understood from anything I have here said, that Mr. Clark does not occasionally contribute editorial matter to the magazine. His compositions, however, are far from numerous, and are always to be distinguished by their style, which is more "easily to be imagined than de-

scribed." It has its merit, beyond doubt, but I shall not undertake to say that either "vigor," "force" or "impressiveness" is the precise term by which that merit should be designated. Mr. Clark once did me the honor to review my poems, and——I forgive him.

"The Knickerbocker" has been long established, and seems to have in it some important elements of success. Its title, for a merely local one, is unquestionably good. Its contributors have usually been men of eminence. Washington Irving was at one period regularly engaged. Paulding, Bryant, Neal, and several others of nearly equal note have also at various times furnished articles, although none of these gentlemen, I believe, continue their communications. In general, the contributed matter has been praiseworthy; the printing, paper, and so forth, have been excellent, and there certainly has been no lack of exertion in the way of what is termed "putting the work before the eye of the public," still some incomprehensible *incubus* has seemed always to sit heavily upon it, and it has never succeeded in attaining *position* among intelligent or educated readers. On account of the manner in which it is necessarily edited, the work is deficient in that absolutely indispensable element, *individuality*. As the editor has no precise character, the magazine, as a matter of course, can have none. When I say "no precise character," I mean that Mr. C., as a literary man, has about him no determinateness, no distinctiveness, no saliency of point;—an apple, in fact, or a pumpkin, has more angles. He is as smooth as oil or a sermon from Doctor Hawks; he is noticeable for nothing in the world except for the markedness by which he is noticeable for nothing.

What is the precise circulation of "The Knickerbocker" at present I am unable to say; it has been

variously stated at from eight to eighteen hundred subscribers. The former estimate is no doubt too low, and the latter, I presume, is far too high. There are, perhaps, some fifteen hundred copies printed.

At the period of his brother's decease, Mr. Lewis G. Clark bore to him a striking resemblance, but within the last year or two there has been much alteration in the person of the editor of the "Knickerbocker." He is now, perhaps, forty-two or three, but still good-looking. His forehead is, phrenologically, bad—round and what is termed "bullety." The mouth, however, is much better, although the smile is too constant and lacks expression; the teeth are white and regular. His hair and whiskers are dark, the latter meeting voluminously beneath the chin. In height Mr. C. is about five feet ten or eleven, and in the street might be regarded as quite a "personable man"; in society I have never had the pleasure of meeting him. He is married, I believe.

ANNE C. LYNCH

MISS ANNE CHARLOTTE LYNCH has written little;—her compositions are even too few to be collected in volume form. Her prose had been, for the most part, anonymous—critical papers in "The New York Mirror" and elsewhere, with unacknowledged contributions to the annuals, especially "The Gift," and "The Diadem," both of Philadelphia. Her "Diary of a Recluse," published in the former work, is, perhaps, the best specimen of her prose manner and ability. I remember, also, a fair *critique* on Fanny Kemble's poems;—this appeared in "The Democratic Review."

In poetry, however, she has done better, and given evidence of at least unusual talent. Some of her compositions in this way are of merit, and one or two of excellence. In the former class I place her "Bones in the Desert," published in "The Opal" for 1846, her "Farewell to Ole Bull," first printed in "The Tribune," and one or two of her sonnets—not forgetting some graceful and touching lines on the death of Mrs. Willis. In the latter class I place two noble poems, "The Ideal" and "The Ideal Found." These should be considered as one, for each is by itself imperfect. In modulation and vigor of rhythm, in dignity and elevation of sentiment, in metaphorical appositeness and accuracy, and in energy of expression, I really do not know where to point out anything American much superior to them. Their ideality is not so manifest as their passions, but I think it an unusual indication of taste in Miss

Lynch, or (more strictly) of an intuitive sense of poetry's true nature, that this passion is just sufficiently subdued to lie within the compass of the poetic art, within the limits of the beautiful. A step farther and it might have passed them. *Mere* passion, however exciting, prosaically excites; it is in its very essence homely, and delights in homeliness: but the *triumph over* passion, as so finely depicted in the two poems mentioned, is one of the purest and most idealizing manifestations of moral beauty.

In character Miss Lynch is enthusiastic, chivalric, self-sacrificing, "equal to any fate," capable of even martyrdom in whatever should seem to her a holy cause—a most exemplary daughter. She has her hobbies, however, (of which a very indefinite idea of "duty" is one,) and is, of course, readily imposed upon by any artful person who perceives and takes advantage of this most amiable failing.

In person she is rather above the usual height, somewhat slender, with dark hair and eyes—the whole countenance at times full of intelligent expression. Her demeanor is dignified, graceful, and noticeable for respose. She goes much into literary society.

CHARLES FENNO HOFFMAN

MR. CHARLES FENNO HOFFMAN has been long known to the public as an author. He commenced his literary career (as is usually the case in America) by writing for the newspapers—for "The New York American" especially, in the editorial conduct of which he became in some manner associated, at a very early age, with Mr. Charles King. His first *book*, I believe, was a collection (entitled "A Winter in the West") of letters published in "The American" during a tour made by their author through the "far West." This work appeared in 1834, went through several editions, was reprinted in London, was very popular, and deserved its popularity. It conveys the *natural* enthusiasm of a true *idealist*, in the proper phrenological sense, of one sensitively alive to beauty in every development. Its scenic descriptions are vivid, because fresh, genuine, unforced. There is nothing of the cant of the tourist for the sake not of nature but of *tourism*. The author writes *what* he feels, and, clearly, *because* he feels it. The style, as well as that of all Mr. Hoffman's books, is easy, free from superfluities, and, although abundant in *broad* phrases, still sigularly refined, gentlemanly. This ability to speak boldly without blackguardism, to use the tools of the rabble when necessary without soiling or roughening the hands with their employment, is a rare and unerring test of the natural in contradistinction from the artificial aristocrat.

Mr. H.'s next work was "Wild Scenes in the Forest and Prairie," very similar to the preceding, but more diversified with anecdote and interspersed with poetry. "Greyslaer" followed, a romance based on the well known murder of Sharp, the Solicitor-General of Kentucky, by Beauchampe. W. Gilmore Simms, (who has far more power, more passion, more movement, more skill than Mr. Hoffman) has treated the same subject more effectively in his novel "Beauchampe," but the fact is that both gentlemen have positively failed, as might have been expected. That both books are interesting is no merit either of Mr. H. or of Mr. S. The real events were more impressive than are the fictitious ones. The *facts* of this remarkable tragedy, as arranged by actual circumstance, would put to shame the skill of the most consummate artist. Nothing was left to the novelist but the amplification of *character*, and at this point neither the author of "Greyslaer" nor of "Beauchampe" is especially *au fait*. The incidents might be better woven into a tragedy.

In the way of poetry, Mr. Hoffman has also written a good deal. "The Vigil of Faith and other Poems" is the title of a volume published several years ago. The subject of the leading poem is happy—whether originally conceived by Mr. H. or based on an actual superstition, I cannot say. Two Indian chiefs are rivals in love. The accepted lover is about to be made happy, when his betrothed is murdered by the discarded suitor. The revenge taken is the careful *preservation* of the life of the assassin, under the idea that the meeting the maiden in another world is the point most desired by both the survivors. The incidents interwoven are picturesque, and there are many quotable passages; the descriptive portions are particularly

good; but the author has erred, first, in narrating the story in the first person, and secondly, in putting into the mouth of the narrator language and sentiments above the nature of an Indian. I say that the narration should not have been in the first person, because, although an Indian may and does fully experience a thousand delicate shades of sentiment, (the whole idea of the story is essentially sentimental,) still he has, clearly, no capacity for their various *expression*. Mr. Hoffman's hero is made to discourse very much after the manner of Rousseau. Nevertheless, "The Vigil of Faith" is, upon the whole, one of our most meritorious poems. The shorter pieces in the collection have been more popular; one or two of the *songs* particularly so—"Sparkling and Bright," for example, which is admirably adapted to song purposes, and is full of lyric feelings. It cannot be denied, however, that, in general, the whole tone, air and spirit of Mr. Hoffman's fugitive compositions are echoes of Moore. At times the very words and figures of the "British Anacreon" are unconsciously adopted. Neither can there be any doubt that this obvious similarity, if not positive imitation, is the source of the commendation bestowed upon our poet by "The Dublin University Magazine," which declares him "the best song writer in America," and does him also the honor to intimate its opinion that "he is a better fellow than the whole Yankee crew" of us taken together—after which there is very little to be said.

Whatever may be the merits of Mr. Hoffman as a poet, it may be easily seen that these merits have been put in the worst possible light by the indiscriminate and lavish approbation bestowed on them by Dr. Griswold in his "Poets and Poetry of America." The editor can find *no* blemish in Mr. H., agrees with

everything and copies everything said in his praise—worse than all, gives him more space in the book than any two, or perhaps three, of our poets combined. All this is as much an insult to Mr. Hoffman as to the public, and has done the former irreparable injury—how or why, it is of course unnecessary to say. "Heaven save us from our friends!"

Mr. Hoffman was the original editor of "The Knickerbocker Magazine," and gave it while under his control a tone and character, the weight of which may be best estimated by the consideration that the work thence received, an impetus which has sufficed to bear it on alive, although tottering, month after month, through even that dense region of unmitigated and unmitigable fog—that dreary realm of outer darkness, of utter and inconceivable dunderheadism, over which has so long ruled King Log the Second, in the august person of one Lewis Gaylord Clark. Mr. Hoffman subsequently owned and edited "The American Monthly Magazine," one of the best journals we have ever had. He also for one year conducted "The New York Mirror," and has always been a very constant contributor to the periodicals of the day.

He is the brother of Ogden Hoffman. Their father, whose family came to New York from Holland before the time of Peter Stuyvesant, was often brought into connexion or rivalry with such men as Pinckney, Hamilton and Burr.

The character of no man is more universally esteemed and admired than that of the subject of this memoir. He has a host of friends, and it is quite impossible that he should have an enemy in the world. He is chivalric to a fault, enthusiastic, frank without discourtesy, an ardent admirer of the beautiful, a gentleman of *the best* school—a gentle-

man by birth, by education and by instinct. His manners are graceful and winning in the extreme—quiet, affable and dignified, yet cordial and *dégages*. He converses much, earnestly, accurately and well. In person he is remarkably handsome. He is about five feet ten in height, somewhat stoutly made. His countenance is a noble one—a full index of the character. The features are somewhat massive but regular. The eyes are blue, or light gray, and full of fire; the mouth finely formed, although the lips have a slight expression of voluptuousness; the forehead, to my surprise although high, gives no indication, in the region of the temples, of that ideality (or love of the beautiful) which is the distinguishing trait of his moral nature. The hair curls, and is of a dark brown, interspersed with gray. He wears full whiskers. Is about forty years of age. Unmarried.

MARY E. HEWITT

I AM not aware that Mrs. Hewitt has written any prose; but her poems have been many, and occasionally excellent. A collection of them was published, in an exquisitely tasteful form, by Ticknor & Co., of Boston. The leading piece, entitled "Songs of our Land," although the longest, was by no means the most meritorious. In general, these compositions evince poetic fervor, classicism, and keen appreciation both of moral and physical beauty. No one of them, perhaps, can be judiciously commended as a whole; but no one of them is without merit, and there are several which would do credit to any poet in the land. Still, even these latter are particularly rather than generally commendable. They lack unity, totality—ultimate effect, but abound in forcible passages. For example:

> Shall I portray thee in thy glorious seeming,
> Thou that the pharos of my darkness art?...
>
> Like the blue lotos on its own clear river
> Lie thy soft eyes, beloved, upon my soul....
>
> And there the slave, a slave no more,
> Hung reverent up the chain he wore....
>
> Here 'mid your wild and dark defile
> O'erawed and wonder-whelmed I stand,
> And ask—"is this the fearful vale
> That opens on the shadowy land?"....

Oh friends! we would be treasured still,
Though Time's cold hand should cast
His misty veil, in after years,
Over the idol Past,
Yet send to us some offering thought
O'er Memory's ocean wide,
Pure as the Hindoo's votive lamp
On Ganga's sacred tide.

Mrs. Hewitt has warm partialities for the sea and all that concerns it. Many of her best poems turn upon sea adventures or have reference to a maritime life. Some portions of her "God bless the Mariner" are *naïve* and picturesque: e. g.—

God bless the happy mariner!
A homely garb wears he,
And he goeth *with a rolling gait,*
Like a ship before the sea.
He hath piped the loud "ay, ay, Sir!"
O'er the voices of the main
Till his deep tones have the hoarseness
Of the rising hurricane.

But oh, a spirit looketh
From out his clear blue eye,
With a truthful childlike earnestness,
Like an angel from the sky.

A venturous life the sailor leads
Between the sky and sea,
But, when the hour of dread is past,
A merrier who than he?

The tone of some quatrains entitled "Alone," differs materially from that usual with Mrs. Hewitt. The idea is happy and well managed.

Mrs. Hewitt's sonnets are upon the whole, her most praiseworthy compositions. One entitled "Hercules and Omphale" is noticeable for the vigor of its rhythm.

Reclined, enervate, on the couch of ease,
No more he pants for deeds of high emprize;
For Pleasure holds in soft voluptuous ties
Enthralled, great Jove-descended Hercules.
The hand that bound the Erymanthean boar,
Hesperia's dragon slew with bold intent,
That from his quivering side in triumph rent
The skin the Cleonæan lion wore,
Holds forth the goblet—while the Lydian queen,
Robed like a nymph, her brow enwreathed with vine,
Lifts high the amphora brimmed with rosy wine,
And pours the draught the crowned cup within.
And thus the soul, abased to sensual sway,
Its worth forsakes—its might forgoes for aye.

The unusual force of the line italicized, will be observed. This force arises first, from the directness, or colloquialism without vulgarity, of its expression:—(the relative pronoun "which" is very happily omitted between "skin" and "the")—and, secondly, to the musical repetition of the vowel in "Cl*e*on*æ*an", together with the alliterative terminations in "Cleon*æa*n" and "li*o*n." The effect, also, is much aided by the sonorous conclusion "wore."

Another and better instance of fine versification occurs in "Forgotten Heroes."

And the peasant mother at her door,
To the babe that climbed her knee,
Sang aloud the land's heroic songs—
Sang of Thermopylæ—
Sang of Mycale—of Marathon—
Of proud Platæa's day—
Till the wakened hills from peak to peak
Echoed the glorious lay.
Oh, godlike name!—oh, godlike deed!
Song-borne afar on every breeze,
Ye are sounds to thrill like a battle shout,
Leonidas! Miltiades!

The general intention here is a line of four iambuses alternating with a line of three; but, less

through rhythmical skill than a musical ear, the poetess has been led into some exceedingly happy variations of the theme. For example;—in place of the ordinary iambus as the first foot of the first, of the second, and of the third line, a bastard iambus has been employed. These lines are thus scanned:

And the peas | ant moth | er at | her door |
4 4 2 2 2
To the babe | that climbed | her knee |
4 4 2 2
Sang aloud | the land's | hero | ic songs |
4 4 2 2 2

The fourth line,

Sang of | Thermo | pylæ
2 2 2

is well varied by a trochee, instead of an iambus, in the first foot; and the variation expresses forcibly the enthusiasm excited by the topic of the supposed songs, "Thermopylæ." The fifth line is scanned as the first three. The sixth is the general intention, and consists simply of iambuses. The seventh is like the first three and the fifth. The eighth, is like the fourth; and here again the opening trochee is admirably adapted to the *movement* of the topic. The ninth is the general intention, and is formed of four iambuses. The tenth is an alternating line and yet has four iambuses, instead of the usual three; as has also the final line—an alternating one, too. A fuller volume is in this manner given to the close of subject; and this volume is fully in keeping with the rising enthusiasm. The last line but one has *two* bastard iambuses, thus:

Ye are sounds | to thrill | like a bat | tle shout | .
4 4 2 4 4 2

Upon the whole, it may be said that the most skilful versifier could not have written lines better

suited to the purposes of the poet. The errors of "Alone," however, and of Mrs. Hewitt's poems generally, show that we must regard the beauties pointed out above, merely in the light to which I have already alluded—that is to say, as occasional happiness to which the poetess is led by a musical ear.

I should be doing this lady injustice were I not to mention that, at times, she rises into a higher and purer region of poetry than might be supposed, or inferred, from any of the passages which I have hitherto quoted. The conclusion of her "Ocean Tide to the Rivulet" puts me in mind of the rich spirit of Horne's noble epic, "Orion."

> Sadly the flowers their faded petals close
> Where on thy banks they languidly repose,
> Waiting in vain to hear thee onward press;
> And pale Narcissus by thy margin side
> Hath lingered for thy coming, drooped and died,
> Pining for thee amid the loneliness.
>
> Hasten, beloved!—*here! 'neath the o'erhanging rock!*
> Hark! from the deep, my anxious hope to mock,
> *They call me back unto my parent main.*
> Brighter than Thetis thou—and *ah, more fleet!*
> *I hear the rushing of thy fair white feet!*
> Joy! joy!—my breast receives its own again!

The personifications here are well managed. The "Here!—'neath the o'erhanging rock!" has the high merit of being truthfully, by which I mean *naturally*, expressed, and imparts exceeding vigor to the whole stanza. The idea of the ebb-tide, conveyed in the second line italicized, is one of the happiest imaginable; and too much praise can scarcely be bestowed on the "rushing" of the "fair white feet." The passage altogether is full of fancy, earnestness, and the truest poetic strength. Mrs. Hewitt has given many such *indications* of a fire

which, with more earnest endeavor, might be readily fanned into flame.

In character, she is sincere, fervent, benevolent—sensitive to praise and to blame; in temperament melancholy; in manner subdued; converses earnestly yet quietly. In person she is tall and slender, with black hair and full gray eyes; complexion dark; general expression of the countenance singularly interesting and agreeable.

THOMAS HOOD

"FREQUENTLY since his death," says the American editor of his works, "Hood has been called a great author, a phrase used not inconsiderately or in vain," but, if we adopt the conventional idea of "a great author," there has lived, perhaps, no writer of the last half century who, with equal notoriety, was *less* entitled than Hood to the term. In fact he was a literary merchant whose principal stock-in-trade was littleness—for during the larger portion of his life he seemed to breathe only for the purpose of perpetrating puns—things of such despicable platitude that the man who is capable of habitually committing them is very seldom capable of anything else. In especial, whatever merit may accidentally be discovered in a pun, arises altogether from *unexpectedness*. This is its element, and is twofold. First, we demand that the combination of the pun be unexpected, and secondly, we demand the most entire unexpectedness in the pun *per se*. A rare pun, rarely appearing is, to a certain extent, a pleasurable effect—but to no mind, however debased in taste, is a continuous effort at punning otherwise than unendurable. The man who maintains that he derives gratification from any such chapters of punnage as Hood was in the daily habit of putting on paper has no claim to be believed upon his oath.

The continuous and premeditated puns of Hood, however, are to be regarded as the weak points of the man. Independently of their ill effect, in a

literary view, as mere puns, they leave upon us a painful impression; for too evidently they are the hypochondriac's struggles at mirth—they are the grinnings of the death's-head. No one can read his "Literary Reminiscences" without being convinced of his habitual despondency—and the species of pseudo-wit in question is precisely of that character which would be adopted by an author of Hood's temperament and cast of intellect when compelled to write at an emergency. That his heart had no interest in these *niaiseries* is clear. We allude, of course, to his *mere* puns for the puns' sake—a class of writings by which he attained his most extensive renown. That he did more in this way than any other would follow as a corollary from what we have already said—for generally he was unhappy, and almost continually he was obliged to write *invita Minerva*. But his true element was a very rare and ethereal class of *humour*, in which the *mere* pun was left altogether out of sight, or took the character of the richest *grotesquerie*, impressing the imaginative reader with very remarkable force, as if by a new phase of the ideal. It is in this species of brilliant *grotesqueries*, uttered with a rushing *abandon* which wonderfully aided its effect, that Hood's marked originality of manner consisted; and it is this which fairly entitles him at times to the epithet "great";—we say, fairly so entitles him; for *that* undeniably may be considered *great* (of whatever seeming littleness in itself) which has the capability of producing intense emotion in the minds of those who are themselves undeniably great.

When we said, however, that Hood wrought profound impressions upon imaginative men, we spoke only of what is imagination in the popular acceptance of the term. His true province—that is to say

the field in which he is distinctive—is a kind of borderland between the Fancy and the Fantasy—but in this region he reigns supreme. But when we speak of his province as a borderland between Fantasy and Fancy, of course we do not mean rigorously to confine him to this province. He has made very successful and frequent incursions into the dominions of humour (in general he has been too benevolent to be witty), and there have been one or two occasions in which he has stepped boldly into the realm of Imagination herself. We mean to say, however, that he is rarely imaginative for more than a paragraph at a time. In a word, the genius of Hood is the result of vivid fancy impelled or controlled, certainly tinctured at all points, by hypochondriasis. In his wild "Ode to Melancholy" we perceive this result in the very clearest of manifestations. Few things have ever more deeply affected us than the passages which follow:—

O clasp me, sweet, whilst thou art mine,
And do not take my tears amiss;
For tears must flow to wash away
A thought that shows so stern as this:
Forgive, if somewhile I forget,
In woe to come, the present bliss,
As frighted Proserpine let fall
Her flowers at the sight of Dis,
Ev'n so the dark and bright will kiss.
The sunniest things throw sternest shade.
And there is ev'n a happiness
That makes the heart afraid!

All things are touch'd with melancholy
Born of the secret soul's mistrust,
To feel her fair ethereal wings
Weigh down with vile degraded dust
Even the bright extremes of joy
Bring on conclusions of disgust,

Like the sweet blossoms of the May
Whose fragrance ends in must.
O give her, then, her tribute just,
Her sighs and tears, and musings holy
There is no music in the life
That sounds with idiot laughter solely;
There's not a string attuned to mirth,
But has its chords of melancholy."

"The Dream of Eugene Aram," is too well known in America to need comment from us. It has more of true imagination than almost any other composition of its author—but even when engaged on so serious a subject, he found great difficulty in keeping aloof from the grotesque—the result (we say) of warm fancy impelled by hypochondriasis. The opening stanza affords an example:

" 'Twas in the prime of summer time,
An evening calm and cool,
When four-and-twenty happy boys
Came bounding out of school;
There were some that ran, *and some that leapt*
Like troutlets in a pool."

The twenty-fourth stanza approaches more nearly the imaginative spirit than any passage in the poem, but the taint of the fantastical is over it still:

And peace went with them one and all
And each calm pillow spread;
But guilt was my grim chamberlain,
That lighted me to bed;
And drew my midnight curtains round,
With fingers bloody red!"

"Fair Ines," is so beautiful that we shall purloin it in full, although we have no doubt that it is familiar to our readers.* "Miss Kilmansegg and her Precious Leg," is, perhaps, more thoroughly charac-

*And for this reason it is now omitted.—*Ed.*

teristic of Hood's genius than any single thing which he has written. It is quite a long poem—comprising nearly three thousand lines—and its author has evidently laboured much with it. Its chief defect is in its versification; for this Hood had no ear—of its principles he knew nothing at all. Not that his verses, individually, are very lame, but that they have no capacity for running together. The reader is continually getting baulked, not because the lines are unreadable, but because the lapse from one rhythm to another is so inartistically managed.

The story concerns a very rich heiress who is excessively pampered by her parents, and who at length gets thrown from a horse and so injures a leg as to render amputation inevitable. To supply the place of the true limb, she insists upon a leg of solid gold—a leg of the exact proportions of the original. She puts up with its inconvenience for the sake of the admiration it excites. Its attraction, however, excites the cupidity of a *chevalier d'industrie*, who cajoles her into wedlock, dissipates her fortune, and finally, purloining her golden leg, dashes out her brains with it, elopes, and puts an end to the story. It is wonderfully well told, and abounds in the most brilliant points—embracing something of each of the elementary faculties which we have been discussing—but most especially rich in that which we have termed *Fantasy*.

The most remarkable poems, however, are those which we have still to speak of. They convey, too, most distinctly the genius of the author—nor can any one thoughtfully read them without a conviction that hitherto that genius has been greatly misconceived—without perceiving that even the wit of Hood had its birth in a tint of melancholy perhaps hereditary—and nearly amounting to monomania.

"The Song of the Shirt" is such a composition as only Hood could have conceived or written. Its popularity has been unbounded. Its effect arises from that *grotesquerie* which we have referred to the vivid fancy of the author, impelled by hypochondriasis; but "The Song of the Shirt" has scarcely a claim to the title of *poem*. This, however, is a mere question of words, and can by no means affect the high merit of the composition, to whatever appellation it may be considered entitled.

"The Bridge of Sighs," on the contrary, is a poem of the loftiest order, and, with one exception, the finest written by Hood—being very far superior to "The Dream of Eugene Aram." Not its least merit is the effective rush and whirl of its singular versification—so thoroughly in accordance with the wild insanity which is the thesis of the whole.

"The Haunted House" we prefer to any composition of its author. It is a masterpiece of its kind—and that kind belongs to a very lofty—if not to the very loftiest order of poetical literature. Had we seen this piece before penning our first notice of Hood* we should have had much hesitation in speaking of Fancy and Fantasy as his predominant features. At all events we should have given him credit for much more of true imagination than we did. Not the least merit of the work is its rigorous simplicity. There is no narrative, and no doggerel philosophy. The whole subject is the description of a deserted house which the popular superstition considered haunted. The thesis in one of the truest in all poetry. *As* a mere thesis it is really difficult to conceive anything better. The strength of the poet is put forth in the invention of traits in keeping with the ideas of crime, abandonment, and

*This Review of Hood's Poems appeared in two parts.

ghostly visitation. Every legitimate art is brought in to aid in conveying the intended effects; and (what is quite remarkable in the case of Hood) nothing discordant is at any point introduced. He has here very little of what we have designated as the fantastic—little which is not strictly harmonious. The metre and rhythm are not only in themselves admirably adapted to the whole design, but, with a true artistic feeling, the poet has preserved a thorough monotone throughout, and renders its effect more impressive by the repetition (gradually increasing in frequency towards the *finale*) of one of the most pregnant and effective of the stanzas:

> "O'er all there hung a shadow and a fear,
> And a sense of mystery the spirit daunted,
> And said, as plain as whisper in the ear
> The place is haunted!"

Had Hood only written "The Haunted House" it would have sufficed to render him immortal.

RICHARD ADAMS LOCKE

ABOUT twelve years ago, I think, "The New York Sun," a daily paper, price one penny, was established in the city of New York by Mr. Moses Y. Beach, who engaged Mr. Richard Adams Locke as its editor. In a well-written prospectus, the object of the journal professed to be that of "supplying the public with the news of the day at so cheap a rate as to lie within the means of all." The consequences of the scheme, in their influence on the whole newspaper business of the country, and through this business on the interests of the country at large, are probably beyond all calculation.

Previous to "The Sun," there had been an unsuccessful attempt at publishing a penny paper in New York, and "The Sun" itself was originally projected and for a short time issued by Messrs. Day & Wisner; its *establishment*, however, is altogether due to Mr. Beach, who purchased it of its disheartened originators. The first decided *movement* of the journal, nevertheless, is to be attributed to Mr. Locke; and in so saying, I by no means intend any depreciation of Mr. Beach, since in the engagement of Mr. L. he had but given one of the earliest instances of that unusual sagacity for which I am inclined to yield him credit.

At all events, "The Sun" was revolving in a comparatively narrow orbit when, one fine day, there appeared in its editorial columns a prefatory article announcing very remarkable astronomical

discoveries made at the Cape of Good Hope by Sir John Herschell. The information was said to have been received by "The Sun" from an early copy of "The Edinburgh Journal of Science," in which appeared a communication from Sir John himself. This preparatory announcement took very well, (there had been no hoaxes in those days,) and was followed by full details of the reputed discoveries, which were now found to have been made chiefly in respect to the moon, and by means of a telescope to which the one lately constructed by the Earl of Rosse is a plaything. As these discoveries were gradually spread before the public, the astonishment of that public grew out of all bounds; but those who questioned the veracity of "The Sun"—the authenticity of the communication to "The Edinburgh Journal of Science"—were really very few indeed; and this I am forced to look upon as a far more wonderful thing than any "man-bat" of them all.

About six months before this occurrence, the Harpers had issued an American edition of Sir John Herschell's "Treatise on Astronomy," and I have been much interested in what is there said respecting the possibility of future lunar investigations. The theme excited my fancy, and I longed to give free rein to it in depicting my day-dreams about the scenery of the moon—in short, I longed to write a story embodying these dreams. The obvious difficulty, of course, was that of accounting for the narrator's acquaintance with the satellite; and the equally obvious mode of surmounting the difficulty was the supposition of an extraordinary telescope. I saw at once that the chief interest of such a narrative must depend upon the reader's yielding his credence in some measure as to details of actual fact.

At this stage of my deliberations, I spoke of the design to one or two friends—to Mr. John P. Kennedy, the author of "Swallow Barn," among others —and the result of my conversations with them was that the optical difficulties of constructing such a telescope as I conceived were so rigid and so commonly understood, that it would be in vain to attempt giving due verisimilitude to any fiction having the telescope as a basis. Reluctantly, therefore, and only half convinced, (believing the public, in fact, more readily gullible than did my friends,) I gave up the idea of imparting very close verisimilitude to what I should write—that is to say, so close as really to deceive. I fell back upon a style half plausible, half bantering, and resolved to give what interest I could to an actual passage from the earth to the moon, describing the lunar scenery as if surveyed and personally examined by the narrator. In this view I wrote a story which I called "Hans Pfaall," publishing it about six months afterwards in "The Southern Literary Messenger," of which I was then editor.

It was three weeks after the issue of "The Messenger" containing "Hans Pfaall," that the first of the "Moon-hoax" editorials made its appearance in "The Sun," and no sooner had I seen the paper than I understood the jest, which not for a moment could I doubt had been suggested by my own *jeu d'esprit*. Some of the New York journals ("The Transcript" among others) saw the matter in the same light, and published the "Moon story" side by side with "Hans Pfaall," thinking that the author of the one had been detected in the author of the other. Although the details are, with some exceptions, very dissimilar, still I maintain that the general features of the two compositions

are nearly identical. Both are *hoaxes*, (although one is in a *tone* of mere banter, the other of downright earnest;) both hoaxes are on one subject, astronomy; both on the same point of that subject, the moon; both professed to have derived exclusive information from a foreign country, and both attempt to give plausibility by minuteness of scientific detail. Add to all this, that nothing of a similar nature had ever been attempted before these two hoaxes, the one of which followed immediately upon the heels of the other.

Having stated the case, however, in this form, I am bound to do Mr. Locke the justice to say that he denies having seen my article prior to the publication of his own; I am bound to add, also, that I believe him.

Immediately on the completion of the "Moon story," (it was three or four days in getting finished,) I wrote an examination of its claims to credit. showing distinctly its fictitious character, but was astonished at finding that I could obtain few listeners, so really eager were all to be deceived, so magical were the charms of a style that served as the vehicle of an exceedingly clumsy invention.

It may afford even now some amusement to see pointed out those particulars of the hoax which should have sufficed to establish its real character. Indeed, however rich the imagination displayed in this fiction, it wanted much of the force which might have been given it by a more scrupulous attention to general analogy and to fact. That the public were misled, even for an instant, merely proves the gross ignorance which (ten or twelve years ago) was so prevalent on astronomical topics.

The moon's distance from the earth is, in round numbers, 240,000 miles. If we wish to ascertain

how near, apparently, a lens would bring the satellite, (or any distant object,) we, of course, have but to divide the distance by the magnifying, or, more strictly, by the space-penetrating power of the glass. Mr. Locke gives his lens a power of 42,000 times. By this divide 240,000, (the moon's real distance,) and we have five miles and five-sevenths as the apparent distance. No animal could be seen so far, much less the minute points particularized in the story. Mr. L. speaks about Sir John Herschell's perceiving flowers, (the *papaver Rheas*, etc.,) and even detecting the color and the shape of the eyes of small birds. Shortly before, too, the author himself observes that the lens would not render perceptible objects less than eighteen inches in diameter; but even this, as I have said, is giving the glass far too great a power.

On page 18, (of the pamphlet edition,) speaking of "a hairy veil" over the eyes of a species of bison, Mr. L. says—"It immediately occurred to the acute mind of Doctor Herschell that this was a providential contrivance to protect the eyes of the animal from the great extremes of light and darkness to which all the inhabitants of our side of the moon are periodically subjected." But this should not be thought a very "acute"observation of the Doctor's. The inhabitants of our side of the moon have, evidently, no darkness at all; in the absence of the sun they have a light from the earth equal to that of thirteen full moons, so that there can be nothing of the extremes mentioned.

The topography throughout, even when professing to accord with Blunt's Lunar Chart, is at variance with that and all other lunar charts, and even at variance with itself. The points of the compass, too, are in sad confusion; the writer seeming to be un-

aware that, on a lunar map, these are not in accordance with terrestial points—the east being to the left, and so forth.

Deceived, perhaps, by the vague titles *Mare Nubium*, *Mare Tranquilitatis*, *Mare Fœcunditatis*, etc., given by astronomers of former times to the dark patches on the moon's surface, Mr. L. has long details respecting oceans and other large bodies of water in the moon; whereas there is no astronomical point more positively ascertained than that no such bodies exist there. In examining the boundary between light and darkness in a crescent or gibbous moon, where this boundary crosses any of the dark places, the line of division is found to be jagged; but were these dark places liquid, they would evidently be even.

The description of the wings of the man-bat (on page 21) is but a literal copy of Peter Wilkins' account of the wings of his flying islanders. This simple fact should at least have induced suspicion.

On page 23 we read thus—"What a prodigious influence must our thirteen times larger globe have exercised upon this satellite when an embryo in the womb of time, the passive subject of chemical affinity!" Now, this is very fine; but it should be observed that no astronomer could have made such remark, especially to any "Journal of Science," for the earth in the sense intended (that of bulk) is not only thirteen but forty-nine times *larger* than the moon. A similar objection applies to the five or six concluding pages of the pamphlet, where, by way of introduction to some discoveries in Saturn, the philosophical correspondent is made to give a minute schoolboy account of that planet—an account quite supererogatory, it might be presumed, in the case of "The Edinburgh Journal of Science."

But there is one point, in especial, which should have instantly betrayed the fiction. Let us imagine the power really possessed of seeing animals on the moon's surface—what in such case would first arrest the attention of an observer from the earth? Certainly neither the shape, size, nor any other peculiarity in these animals so soon as their remarkable *position*—they would seem to be walking heels up and head down. after the fashion of flies on a ceiling, The real observer (however prepared by previous knowledge) would have commented on this odd phenomenon before proceeding to other details; the fictitious observer has not even alluded to the subject but in the case of the man-bats speaks of seeing their entire bodies, when it is demonstrable that he could have seen little more than the apparently flat hemisphere of the head.

I may as well observe, in conclusion, that the size, and especially the powers of the man-bats, (for example, their ability to fly in so rare an atmosphere—if, indeed, the moon has any,) with most of the other fancies in regard to animal and vegetable existence, are at variance generally with all analogical reasoning on these themes, and that analogy here will often amount to the most positive demonstration. The temperature of the moon, for instance, is rather above that of boiling water, and Mr. Locke, consequently, has committed a serious oversight in not representing his man-bats, his bisons, his game of all kinds—to say nothing of his vegetables—as each and all done to a turn.

It is, perhaps, scarcely necessary to add, that all the suggestions attributed to Brewster and Herschell in the beginning of the hoax, about the "transfusion of artificial light through the focal object of vision," etc., etc., belong to that species of figur-

ative writing which comes most properly under the head of rigmarole. There is a real and very definite limit to optical discovery among the stars. a limit whose nature need only be stated to be understood. If, indeed, the casting of large lenses were all that is required, the ingenuity of man would ultimately prove equal to the task, and we might have them of any size demanded;* but, unhappily, in proportion to the increase of size in the lens, and consequently of space-penetrating power, is the diminution of light from the object by diffusion of the rays. And for this evil there is no remedy within human reach; for an object is seen by means of that light alone, whether direct or reflected, which proceeds from the object itself. Thus the only artificial light which could avail Mr. Locke, would be such as he should be able to throw, not upon "the focal object of vision," but upon *the moon*. It has been easily calculated that when the light proceeding from a heavenly body becomes so diffused as to be as weak as the natural light given out by the stars collectively in a clear, moonless night, then the heavenly body for any practical purpose is no longer visible.

The singular blunders to which I have referred being properly understood, we shall have all the better reason for wonder at the prodigious *success* of the hoax. Not one person in ten discredited it, and (strangest point of all!) the doubters were chiefly those who doubted without being able to say why—the ignorant, those uninformed in astronomy, people who *would not* believe because the thing was so novel,

*Neither of the Herschells dreamed of the possibility of a speculum six feet in diameter, and now the marvel has been triumphantly accomplished by Lord Rosse. There is, in fact, no physical *impossibility* in our casting lenses of even fifty feet diameter or more. A sufficiency of means and *skill is* all that is demanded.

so entirely "out of the usual way." A grave professor of mathematics in a Virginian college told me seriously that he had *no doubt* of the truth of the whole affair! The great effect wrought upon the public mind is referable, first, to *the novelty of the idea;* secondly, to the fancy-exciting and reason-repressing character of the alleged discoveries; thirdly, to the consummate tact with which the deception was brought forth; fourthly, to the exquisite *vraisemblance* of the narration. The hoax was circulated to an immense extent, was translated into various languages—was even made the subject of (quizzical) discussion in astronomical societies; drew down upon itself the grave denunciation of Dick, and was, upon the whole, decidedly the greatest *hit* in the way of *sensation*—of merely popular sensation—ever made by any similiar fiction either in America or in Europe.

Having read the Moon story to an end, and found it anticipative of all the main points of my "Hans Pfaall," I suffered the latter to remain unfinished. The chief design in carrying my hero to the moon was to afford him an opportunity of describing the lunar scenery, but I found that he could add very little to the minute and authentic account of Sir John Herschell. The first part of "Hans Pfaall," occupying about eighteen pages of "The Messenger," embraced merely a journal of the passage between the two orbs, and a few words of general observation on the most obvious features of the satellite; the second part will most probably never appear. I did not think it advisable even to bring my voyager back to his parent earth. He remains where I left him, and is still, I believe, "the man in the moon."

From the epoch of the hoax "The Sun" shone with unmitigated splendor. The start thus given

the paper insured it a triumph; it has now a daily circulation of not far from fifty thousand copies, and is, therefore, probably, the most really influential journal of its kind in the world. Its success firmly established "the penny system" throughout the country, and (*through* "The Sun") consequently, we are indebted to the genius of Mr. Locke for one of the most important steps ever yet taken in the pathway of human progress.

On dissolving, about a year afterwards, his connexion with Mr. Beach, Mr. Locke established a political daily paper, "The New Era," conducting it with distinguished ability. In this journal he made, very unwisely, an attempt at a second hoax, giving the *finale* of the adventures of Mungo Park in Africa —the writer pretending to have come into possession, by some accident, of the lost MSS. of the traveller. No one, however, seemed to be deceived, (Mr. Locke's columns were a suspected district,) and the adventures were never brought to an end. They were richly imaginative.

The next point made by their author was the getting up a book on magnetism as the *premum mobile* of the universe, in connexion with Doctor Sherwood, the practitioner of magnetic remedies. The more immediate purpose of the treatise was the setting forth a new magnetic method of obtaining the longitude. The matter was brought before Congress and received with favorable attention. What definite action was had I know not. A review of the work appeared in "The Army and Navy Chronicle," and made sad havoc of the whole project. It was enabled to do this, however, by attacking in detail the accuracy of some calculations of no very radical importance. These and others Mr. Locke is now engaged in carefully revising; and my

own opinion is that his theory (which he has reached more by dint of imagination than of anything else) will finally be established, although, perhaps, never thoroughly by *him*.

His prose style is noticeable for its concision, luminousness, completeness—each quality in its proper place. He has that *method* so generally characteristic of genius proper. Everything he writes is a model in its peculiar way, serving just the purposes intended and nothing to spare. He has written some poetry, which, through certain radical misapprehensions, is not very good.

Like most men of *true* imagination, Mr. Locke is a seemingly paradoxical compound of coolness and excitability.

He is about five feet seven inches in height, symmetrically formed; there is an air of distinction about his whole person—the *air noble* of genius. His face is strongly pitted by the small-pox, and, perhaps from the same cause, there is a marked obliquity in the eyes; a certain calm, clear *luminousness*, however, about these latter, amply compensates for the defect, and the forehead is truly beautiful in its intellectuality. I am acquainted with no person possessing so fine a forehead as Mr. Locke. He is married, and about forty-five years of age, although no one would suppose him to be more than thirty-eight. He is a lineal descendant from the immortal author of the "Essay on the Human Understanding."

ELIZABETH OAKES SMITH*

THIS is a very pretty little volume, neatly printed, handsomely bound, embracing some two hundred pages sixteen-mo. and introduced to the public, somewhat unnecessarily, in a preface by Dr. Rufus W. Griswold. In this preface we find some few memoranda of the personal authoress, with some critical opinions in relation to her poems. The memoranda are meagre. A much more interesting account of Mrs. Smith is given by Mr. John Neal, and was included by Mr. John Keese in the introduction to a former collection of her works. The critical opinions may as well be here quoted, at least in part. Dr. Griswold says:

> Seeking expression, yet shrinking from notoriety, and with a full share of that respect for a just fame and appreciation which belongs to every high-toned mind, yet oppressed by its shadow when circumstance is the impelling motive of publication, the writings of Mrs. Smith might well be supposed to betray great inequality; still in her many contributions to the magazines, it is remarkable how few of her pieces display the usual carelessness and haste of magazine articles. As an essayist especially, while graceful and lively, she is compact and vigorous; while through poems, essays, tales, and criticisms, (for her industrious pen seems quite equally skilful and happy in each of these departments of literature,) through all her manifold writings, indeed, there runs the same beautiful vein of philosophy, viz.:—that truth and goodness of themselves impart a holy light to the mind which gives it a power far above mere intellectuality; that the highest order of human

*The Poetical writings of Elizabeth Oakes Smith. First complete edition. New York. J. S. Redfield.

intelligence springs from the moral and not the reasoning faculties . . . . . Mrs. Smith's most popular poem is "The Acorn," which, though inferior in high inspiration to "The Sinless Child," is by many preferred for its happy play of fancy and proper finish. Her sonnets, of which she has written many, have not yet been as much admired as the "April Rain," "The Brook," and other fugitive pieces, which we find in many popular collections.

"The Sinless Child" was originally published in the "Southern Literary Messenger," where it at once attracted much attention from the novelty of its conception and the general grace and purity of its style. Undoubtedly it is one of the most original of American poems—surpassed in this respect, we think, only by Maria del Occidente's "Bride of Seven." Of course, we speak merely of long poems. We have had in this country many brief fugitive pieces far excelling in this most important point (originality) either "The Bride of Seven" or "The Sinless Child" —far excelling, indeed, any transatlantic poems. After all, it is chiefly in works of what is absurdly termed "sustained effort" that we fall in any material respect behind our progenitors.

"The Sinless Child" is quite long, including more than two hundred stanzas, generally of eight lines. The metre throughout is iambic tetrameter, alternating with trimeter—in other words, lines of four iambuses alternate with lines of three. The variations from this order are rare. The design of the poem is very imperfectly made out. The conception is much better than the execution. "A simple cottage maiden, Eva, given to the world in the widowhood of one parent and the angelic existence of the other . . . . . is found from her birth to be as meek and gentle as are those pale flowers that look imploringly upon us . . . . She is gifted with the

power of interpreting the beautiful mysteries of our earth . . . . . For her the song of the bird is not merely the gushing forth of a nature too full of blessedness to be silent . . . . the humblest plant, the simplest insect, is each alive with truth . . . . . She sees the world not merely with mortal eyes, but looks within to the pure internal life of which the outward is but a type," etc., etc. These passages are taken from the Argument prefixed to Part I. The general thesis of the poetess may, perhaps, be stated as the demonstration that the superior wisdom is moral rather than intellectual; but it may be doubted whether her subject was ever precisely apparent to herself. In a word, she seems to have vacillated between several conceptions—the only very definite idea being that of extreme beauty and purity in a child. At one time we fancy her, for example, attempting to show that the condition of absolute sanctity is one through which mortality may know all things and hold converse with the angels; at another we suppose it her purpose to "create" (in critical language) an entirely novel being, a something that is neither angel nor mortal, nor yet fairy in the ordinary sense—in a word, an original *ens*. Besides these two prominent fancies, however, there are various others which seem continually flitting in and out of the poet's vision, so that her whole work has an indeterminate air. Of this she apparently becomes conscious towards the conclusion, and in the final stanza endeavors to remedy the difficulty by summing up her design—

> The sinless child, with mission high,
> Awhile to earth was given,
> To show us that our world should be
> The vestibule of heaven.

Did we but in the holy light
Of truth and goodness rise,
We might communion hold with God
And spirits from the skies.

The conduct of the narrative is scarcely more determinate—if, indeed, "The Sinless Child" can be said to include a narrative at all. The poem is occupied in its first part with a description of the child, her saintly character, her lone wanderings, the lessons she deduces from all animal and vegetable things, and her communings with the angels. We have then discussions with her mother, who is made to introduce episodical tales, one of "Old Richard," another called "The Defrauded Heart," (a tale of a miser,) and another entitled "The Stepmother." Towards the end of the poem a lover, Alfred Linne, is brought upon the scene. He has been reckless and sinful, but is reclaimed by the heavenly nature of Eva. He finds her sleeping in a forest. At this point occur some of the finest and most characteristic passages of the poem.

Unwonted thought, unwonted calm
Upon his spirit fell;
For he unwittingly had sought
Young Eva's hallowed dell,
And breathed that atmosphere of love,
Around her path that grew:
That evil from her steps repelled
The good unto her drew.

Mem.—The last quatrain of this stanza would have been readily comprehended if punctuated and written thus—

And breathed that atmosphere of love
Around her path that grew—
That evil from her steps repelled—
That good unto her drew.

We may as well observe here, too, that although neatly printed, the volume abounds in typographical errors that very frequently mar the sense—as at page 66, for example, where *come* (near the bottom) is improperly used for *came*, and *scortching* (second line from the top) is substituted for *searching*. We proceed with Alfred's discovery of Eva in the wood.

> Now Eva opes her child-like eyes
> And lifts her tranquil head;
> And Albert, like a guilty thing,
> Had from her presence fled.
> But Eva marked his troubled brow,
> His sad and thoughtful eyes,
> As if they sought yet shrank to hold
> Their converse with the skies.

Communion with the skies—would have been far better. It seems strange to us that any one should have overlooked the word.

> And all her kindly nature stirred,
> She prayed him to remain;
> Well conscious that the pure have power
> To balm much human pain.
> There mingled too, as in a dream,
> About brave Albert Linne,
> A real and ideal form
> Her soul had formed within.

We give the punctuation here as we find it;—it is incorrect throughout, interfering materially with a proper understanding of the passage. There should be a comma after "And" in the first line, a comma in place of the semicolon at the end of the second line, no point at the end of the third line, a comma after "mingled," and none after "form." These seeming *minutiæ* are of real importance; but we refer to them, in case of "The Sinless Child," because here the

aggregate of this species of minor eror is unusually remarkable. Of course it is the proof-reader or editor, and not Mrs. Smith, who is to blame.

Her trusting hand fair Eva laid
In that of Albert Linne,
And for one trembling moment turned
Her gentle thoughts within.
Deep tenderness was in the glance
That rested on his face,
As if her woman-heart had found
Its own abiding-place.

And evermore to him it seemed
Her voice more liquid grew—
"Dear youth, thy soul and mine are one:
One source their being drew!
And they must mingle evermore—
Thy thoughts of love and me
Will, as a light, thy footsteps guide
To life and mystery."

There was a sadness in her tone,
But love unfathomed deep;
As from the centre of the soul
Where the divine may sleep;
Prophetic was the tone and look,
And Albert's noble heart
Sank with a strange foreboding dread
Lest Eva should depart.

And when she bent her timid eyes
As she beside him knelt,
The pressure of her sinless lips
Upon his brow he felt,
And all of earth and all of sin
Fled from her sainted side;
She, the pure virgin of the soul,
Ordained young Albert's bride.

It would, perhaps, have been out of keeping with the more obvious plan of the poem to make Eva

really the bride of Albert. She does not wed him, but dies tranquilly in bed, soon after the spiritual union in the forest. "Eva," says the Argument of Part VII, "hath fulfilled her destiny. Material thing can no farther minister to the growth of her spirit. That waking of the soul to its own deep mysteries—its oneness with another—has been accomplished. A human soul is perfected." At this point the poem may be said to have its conclusion.

In looking back at its general plan, we cannot fail to see traces of high poetic capacity. The first point to be commended is the reach or aim of the poetess. She is evidently discontented with the bald routine of common-place themes, and originality has been with her a principal object. In *all* cases of fictitious composition it should be the *first* object—by which we do not mean to say that it can ever be considered as the most important. But, *certeris paribus*, every class of fiction is the better for originality; every writer is false to his own interest if he fails to avail himself, at the outset, of the effect which is certainly and invariably derivable from the great element, *novelty*.

The execution of "The Sinless Child" is, as we have already said, inferior to its conception—that is, to its conception as it floated, rather than steadily existed, in the brain of the authoress. She enables us to see that she has very *narrowly missed* one of those happy "creations" which now and then immortalize the poet. With a good deal more of deliberate thought before putting pen to paper, with a good deal more of the constructive ability, and with more rigorous discipline in the minor merits of style, and of what is termed in the school-prospectuses, composition, Mrs. Smith would have made of "The Sinless Child" one of the best, if not the very best of American poems.

While speaking of the execution, or, more properly, the conduct of the work, we may as well mention, first, the obviousness with which the stories introduced by Eva's mother are interpolated, or episodical; it is permitted every reader to see that they have no natural connexion with the true theme; and, indeed, there can be no doubt that they were written long before the main narrative was projected. In the second place, we must allude to the artificiality of the *Arguments*, or introductory prose passages, prefacing each Part of the poem. Mrs. Smith had no sounder reason for employing them than Milton and the rest of the epicists have employed them before. If it be said that they are necessary for the proper comprehension of a poem, we reply that this is saying nothing for *them*, but merely much against the poem which demands them as a necessity. Every work of art should contain within itself all that is required for its own comprehension. An "argument" is but another form of the "This is an ox" subjoined to the portrait of an animal with horns. But in making these objections to the management of "The Sinless Child," we must not be understood as insisting upon them as at all material, in view of the lofty merit of originality—a merit which pervades and invigorates the whole work, and which, in our opinion, at least, is far, very far more than sufficient to compensate for every inartisticality of construction. A work of art may be admirably constructed, and yet be null as regards every essentiality of that truest art which is but the happiest development of nature; but no work of art can embody within itself a proper *originality* without giving the plainest manifestations of the creative spirit, or, in more common parlance, of *genius* in its author. The originality of "The Sinless Child" would cover a multitude of greater defects

than Mrs. Smith ever committed, and must forever entitle it to the admiration and respect of every competent critic.

As regards detached passages, we think that the episode of "The Stepmother" may be fairly cited as the best in the poem.

You speak of Hobert's second wife, a lofty dame and bold;
I like not her forbidding air, and forehead high and cold.
The orphans have no cause for grief; she dare not give it now,
Though nothing but a ghostly fear her heart of pride could bow.

One night the boy his mother called; they heard him weeping say,
"Sweet mother, kiss poor Eddy's cheek and wipe his tears away."
Red grew the lady's brow with rage, and yet she feels a strife
Of anger and of terror, too, at thought of that dead wife.

Wild roars the wind; the lights burn blue; the watch-dog howls with fear;
Loud neighs the steed from out the stall. What form is gliding near?
No latch is raised, no step is heard, but a phantom fills the space—
A sheeted spectre from the dead, with cold and leaden face.

What boots it that no other eye beheld the shade appear?
The guilty lady's guilty soul beheld it plain and clear.
It slowly glides within the room and sadly looks around,
And, stooping, kissed her daughter's cheek with lips that gave no sound.

Then softly on the step-dame's arm she laid a death-cold hand,
Yet it hath scorched within the flesh like to a burning brand;
And gliding on with noiseless foot, o'er winding stair and hall,
She nears the chamber where is heard her infant's trembling call.

She smoothed the pillow where he lay, she warmly tucked
the bed,
She wiped his tears and stroked the curls that clustered
round his head.
The child, caressed, unknowing fear, hath nestled him to rest;
The mother folds her wings beside—the mother from the
blest!

The metre of this episode has been altered from its original form, and, we think, improved by the alteration. Formerly, in place of four lines of seven iambuses, the stanza consisted of eight lines—a line of four iambuses alternating with one of three—a more ordinary and artificial, therefore a less desirable arrangement. In the three last quatrains there is an awkward vacillation between the present and perfect tenses, as in the words "beheld," "glides," "kissed," "laid," "hath scorched," "smoothed," "wiped," "hath nestled," "folds." These petty objections, of course, will by no means interfere with the reader's appreciation of the episode, with his admiration of its pathos, its delicacy and its grace—we had almost forgotten to say of its pure and high imagination.

We proceed to cull from "The Sinless Child," a few brief but happy passages at random.

Gentle she was and full of love,
With voice exceeding sweet,
And eyes of dove-like tenderness
Where joy and sadness meet.

———with calm and tranquil eye
That turned instinctively to seek
The blueness of the sky.

Bright missals from angelic throngs
In every bye-way left—
How were the earth of glory shorn
Were it of flowers bereft!

And wheresoe'er the weary heart
Turns in its dim despair,
The meek-eyed blossom upward looks
Inviting it to prayer.

The very winds were hushed to peace
Within the quiet dell,
Or murmured through the rustling bough
Like breathings of a shell.

The mystery of life;
Its many hopes, its many fears
Its sorrow and its strife—
A spirit to behold in all
To guide, admonish, cheer,–
Forever, in all time and place,
To feel an angel near.

I may not scorn the spirit's rights,
For I have seen it rise,
All written o'er with thought, thought, thought
As with a thousand eyes!

And there are things that blight the soul
As with a mildew blight,
And in the temple of the Lord
Put out the blessed light.

It is in the *point* of passages such as these, in their vigor, terseness and novelty, combined with exquisite delicacy, that the more obvious merit of the poem consists. A thousand such *quotable* paragraphs are interspersed through the work, and of themselves would be sufficient to insure its popularity. But we repeat that a far loftier excellence lies *perdu* amid the minor deficiencies of "The Sinless Child."

The other poems of the volume are, as entire compositions, nearer perfection, but, in general, have less of the true poetical element. "The Acorn" is perfect as regards its construction—although, to be

sure, the design is so simple that it could scarcely be marred in its execution. The idea is the old one of detailing the progress of a plant from its germ to its maturity, with the uses and general vicissitudes to which it is subjected. In this case of the acorn the vicissitudes are well imagined, and the execution is more skilfully managed—is more definite, vigorous and pronounced, than in the longer poem. The chief of the minor objections is to the rhythm, which is imperfect, vacillating awkwardly between iambuses and anapæsts, after such fashion that it is impossible to decide whether the rhythm in itself—that is, whether the general intention is anapæstical or iambic. Anapæsts introduced, for the relief of monotone, into an iambic rhythm, are not only admissible but commendable, if not absolutely demanded; but in this case they prevail to such an extent as to overpower the iambic intention, thus rendering the whole versification difficult of comprehension. We give, by way of example, a stanza with the scanning divisions and quantities:

They came | with gifts | that should life | bestow; |
The dew | and the li | ving air— |
The bane | that should work | its dead | ly wo, |
The lit | tle men | had there; |
In the gray | moss cup | was the mil | dew brought, |
The worm | in a rose- | leaf rolled, |
And ma | ny things | with destruc | tion fraught |
That its doom | were quick | ly told. |

Here iambuses and anapæsts are so nearly balanced that the ear hesitates to receive the rhythm as either anapæstic or iambic, that is, it hesitates to receive

it as anything at all. A rhythm should always be distinctly marked by its first foot—that is to say, if the design is iambic, we should commence with an unmistakable iambus, and proceed with this foot until the ear gets fairly accustomed to it before we attempt variation; for which, indeed, there is no *necessity* unless for the relief of monotone. When the rhythm is in this manner thoroughly recognized, we may sparingly vary with anapæsts (or, if the rhythm be trochaic, with dactyls). Spondees, still more sparingly, as absolute discords, may be also introduced either in an iambic or trochaic rhythm. In common with a very large majority of American, and, indeed, of European poets, Mrs. Smith seems to be totally unacquainted with the principles of versification—by which, of course, we mean its *rationale*. Of technical *rules* on the subject there are rather more than enough in our prosodies, and from these abundant rules are deduced the abundant blunders of our poets. There is not a prosody in existence which is worth the paper on which it is printed.

Of the miscellaneous poems included in the volume before us, we greatly prefer "The Summons Answered." It has more of *power*, more of genuine imagination than anything written by its author. It is a story of three "bacchanals," who, on their way from the scene of their revelry, are arrested by the beckoning of a white hand from the partially unclosing door of a tomb. One of the party obeys the summons. It is the tomb of his wife. We quote the two concluding stanzas:

> This restless life with its little fears,
> Its hopes that fade so soon,
> With its yearning tenderness and tears,
> And the burning agony that sears—
> *The sun gone down at noon—*

The spirit crushed to its prison wall,
Mindless of all beside—
This young Richard saw, and felt it all—
Well might the dead abide!

The crimson light in the east is high,
The hoar-frost coldly gleams,
And Richard chilled to the heart well-nigh,
Hath raised his wildered and bloodshot eye
From that long night of dreams.
He shudders to think of the reckless band
And the fearful oath he swore—
But most he thinks of the clay-cold hand,
That opened the old tomb door.

With the quotation of these really noble passages—noble, because full of the truest poetic energy—we take leave of the fair authoress. She is entitled, beyond doubt, to all, and perhaps to much more than the commendation she has received. Her faults are among the peccadilloes, and her merits among the sterling excellencies of the muse.

J. G. C. BRAINARD

AMONG all the *pioneers* of American literature, whether prose or poetical, there is *not one* whose productions have not been much overrated by his countrymen. But this fact is more especially obvious in respect to such of these pioneers as are no longer living,—nor is it a fact of so deeply transcendental a nature as only to be accounted for by the Emersons and Alcotts. In the first place, we have but to consider that gratitude, surprise, and a species of hyper-patriotic triumph have been blended, and finally confounded with mere admiration, or appreciation, in respect to the labors of our earlier writers; and, in the second place, that Death has thrown his customary veil of the sacred over these commingled feelings, forbidding them, in a measure, to be *now* separated or subjected to analysis. "In speaking of the deceased," says that excellent old English Moralist, James Puckle, in his "Gray Cap for a Green Head," so fold up your discourse that their virtues may be outwardly shown, while their vices are wrapped up in silence." And with somewhat too inconsiderate a promptitude have we followed the spirit of this quaint advice. The mass of American readers have been, hitherto, in no frame of mind to view with calmness, and to discuss with discrimination, the true claims of the few who were *first* in convincing the mother country that her sons were not all brainless, as, in the plenitude of her arrogance, she, at one period, half affected and half wished to believe; and where any of these few have departed

from among us, the difficulty of bringing their pretentions to the test of a proper criticism has been enhanced in a very remarkable degree. But even as concerns the living: is there any one so blind as not to see that Mr. Cooper, for example, owes much, and that Mr. Paulding owes *all* of his reputation as a novelist, to his early occupation of the field? Is there any one so dull as not to know that fictions which neither Mr. Paulding nor Mr. Cooper *could* have written, are daily published by native authors without attracting more of commendation than can be crammed into a hack newspaper paragraph? And, again, is there any one so prejudiced as not to acknowledge that all this is because there is no longer either reason or wit in the query,—"Who reads an American book?" It is not because we lack the talent in which the days of Mr. Paulding exulted, but because such talent has shown itself to be common. It is not because we have *no* Mr. Coopers; but because it has been demonstrated that we might, at any moment, have as many Mr. Coopers as we please. In fact we are now strong in our own resources. We have, at length, arrived at that epoch when our literature may and must stand on its own merits, or fall through its own defects. We have snapped asunder the leading-strings of our British Grandmamma, and, better still, we have survived the first hours of our novel freedom,—the first licentious hours of a hobbledehoy braggadocio and swagger. *At last*, then, we are in a condition to be criticised—even more, to be neglected; and the journalist is no longer in danger of being impeached for *lese majesté* of the Democratic Spirit, who shall assert, with sufficient humility, that we have committed an error in mistaking "Kettell's Specimens" for the Pentateuch, or Joseph Rodman Drake for Apollo.

The case of this latter gentleman is one which well illustrates what we have been saying. We believe it was about 1835 that Mr. Dearborn republished the "Culprit Fay," which then, as at the period of its original issue, was belauded by the universal American press, in a manner which must have appeared ludicrous—not to speak *very* plainly—in the eyes of all unprejudiced observers. With a curiosity much excited by comments at once so grandiloquent and so general, we procured and read the poem. What we found it we ventured to express distinctly, and at some length, in the pages of the "Southern Messenger." It is a well versified and sufficiently fluent composition, without high merit of any kind. Its defects are gross and superabundant. Its plot and conduct, considered in reference to its scene, are absurd. Its originality is none at all. Its imagination (and this was the great feature insisted upon by its admirers,) is but a "counterfeit presentment,"—but the shadow of the Shade of that lofty quality which is, in fact, the soul of the Poetic Sentiment—but a drivelling *effort to be fanciful*—an effort resulting in a species of hop-skip-and-go-merry rhodomontade, which the uninitiated feel it a duty to call ideality, and to admire as such, while lost in surprise at the impossibility of performing at least the latter half of the duty with any thing like satisfaction to themselves. And all this we not only asserted, but without difficulty *proved*. Dr. Drake has written some beautiful poems, but the "Culprit Fay," is not of them. We neither expected to hear any dissent from our opinions, nor did we hear any. On the contrary, the approving voice of every critic in the country whose *dictum* we had been accustomed to respect, was to us a sufficient assurance that we had not been very grossly in the wrong. In fact the

public taste was then *approaching* the right. The truth indeed had not, as yet, made itself heard; but we had reached a point at which it had but to be plainly and boldly *put*, to be, at least tacitly admitted.

This habit of apotheosising our literary pioneers was a most indiscriminating one. Upon *all* who wrote, the applause was plastered with an impartiality really refreshing. Of course, the system favored the dunces at the expense of true merit! and, since there existed a certain fixed standard of exaggerated commendation to which all were adapted after the fashion of Procrustes, it is clear that the most meritorious required *the least stretching*,—in other words, that although all were much overrated, the deserving were overrated in a less degree than the unworthy. Thus with Brainard:—a man of indisputable genius, who, in any more discriminate system of panegyric, would have been long ago bepuffed into Demi-Deism; for if "M'Fingal," for example, is in reality what we have been told, the commentators upon Trumbull, as a matter of the simplest consistency, should have exalted into the seventh heaven of poetical dominion the author of the many graceful and vigorous effusions which are now lying, in a very neat little volume, before us.*

Yet we maintain that even these effusions have been overpraised, and materially so. It is not that Brainard has not written poems which may rank with those of any American, with the single exception of Longfellow—but that the general merit of our whole national Muse has been estimated too highly, and that the author of "The Connecticut River" has, individually, shared in the exaggeration.

*The Poems of John G. C. Brainard. A New and Authentic Collection, with an original Memoir of his Life. Hartford: Edward Hopkins.

No poet among us has composed what would deserve the tithe of that amount of approbation so innocently lavished upon Brainard. But it would not suit our purpose just now, to enter into any elaborate analysis of his productions. It so happens, however, that we open the book at a brief poem, an examination of which will stand us in good stead of this general analysis, since it is by this very poem that the admirers of its author are content to swear —since it is the fashion to cite it as his best—since thus, in short, it is the chief basis of his notoriety, if not the surest triumph of his fame.

We allude to "The Fall of Niagara," and shall be pardoned for quoting it in full.

> The thoughts are strange that crowd into my brain
> While I look upward to thee. It would seem
> As if God poured thee from his hollow hand,
> And hung his brow upon thy awful front,
> And spoke in that loud voice which seemed to him
> Who dwelt in Patmos for his Saviour's sake
> The "sound of many waters" and had bade
> Thy flood to chronicle the ages back
> And notch his centuries in the eternal rocks.
>
> Deep calleth unto deep. And what are we
> That hear the question of that voice sublime?
> O, what are all the notes that ever rung
> From war's vain trumpet by thy thundering side?
> Yea, what is all the riot man can make
> In his short life to thy unceasing roar?
> And yet, bold babbler, what art thou to HIM
> Who drowned a world and heaped the waters far
> Above its loftiest mountains?—a light wave
> That breaks and whispers of its Maker's might.

It is a very usual thing to hear these verses called not merely the best of their author, but the best which have been written on the subject of Niagara. Its positive merit appears to us only

partial. We have been informed that the poet *had seen* the great cataract before writing the lines; but the Memoir prefixed to the present edition, denies what, for our own part, we never believed, for Brainard was truly a poet, and no poet could have looked upon Niagara, in the substance, and written thus about it. If he saw it at all, it must have been in fancy—"at a distance"—εκας—as the lying Pindar says he saw Archilocus, who died ages before the villain was born.

To the two opening verses we have no objection; but it may be well observed, in passing, that had the mind of the poet been really "crowned with strange thoughts," and not merely *engaged in an endeavor to think*, he would have entered at once upon the thoughts themselves, without allusion to the state of his brain. His subject would have left him no room for self.

The third line embodies an absurd, and impossible, not to say a contemptible image. We are called upon to conceive a similarity between the *continuous* downward sweep of Niagara, and the momentary splashing of some definite and of course trifling quantity of water *from a hand;* for, although it is the hand of the Deity himself which is referred to, the mind is irresistibly led, by the words "poured from his hollow hand," to that idea which has been *customarily* attached to such phrase. It is needless to say, moreover, that the bestowing upon Deity a human form. is at best a low and most unideal conception.* In fact the poet has committed the

*The Humanitarians held that God was to be understood as having really a human form—See Clarke's Sermons, vol. I. page 26, fol. edit.

"The drift of Milton's argument leads him to employ language which would appear, at first sight, to verge upon their doctrine: but it will be seen immediately that he guards himself against the charge of having adopted one of the most ignorant

grossest of errors in *likening* the fall to *any* material object; for the human fancy can fashion nothing which shall not be inferior in majesty to the cataract itself. Thus bathos is inevitable; and there is no better exemplification of bathos than Mr. Brainard has here given.*

The fourth line but renders the matter worse, for here the figure is most inartistically shifted. The handful of water becomes animate; for it has a front —that is, a forehead, and upon this forehead the Deity proceeds to hang a bow, that is, a rainbow. At the same time he "speaks in that loud voice," &c.; and here it is obvious that the ideas of the writer are in a sad state of fluctuation; for he transfers the idiosyncrasy of the fall itself (that is to say its sound) to the one who pours it from his hand. But not content with all this, Mr. Brainard commands the flood to *keep a kind of tally;* for this is the low thought which the expression about "notching in the rocks" immediately and inevitably induces. The whole of this first division of the poem, embraces, we hesitate not to say, one of the most jarring, inappropriate, mean, and in every way monstrous assemblages of false imagery, which can be found out of the tragedies of Nat Lee, or the farces of Thomas Carlyle.

errors of the dark ages of the church."—Dr. Summer's Notes on Milton's "Christian Doctrine."

The opinion could never have been very general. Andens, a Syrian of Mesopotamia, who lived in the fourth century, was condemned for the doctrine, as heretical. His few disciples were called Anthropmorphites.—*See Du Pin.*

*It is remarkable that Drake, of whose "Culprit Fay" we have just spoken is, perhaps, the sole poet who has employed, in the description of Niagara, imagery which does not produce a pathetic impression. In one of his minor poems he has these magnificent lines:

> How sweet 'twould be, *when all the air*
> *In moonlight swims*, along the river

In the latter division, the poet recovers himself, as if ashamed of his previous bombast. His natural instinct (for Brainard was no artist) has enabled him *to feel* that *subjects which surpass in grandeur all efforts of the human imagination are well depicted only in the simplest and least metaphorical language*— a proposition as susceptible of demonstration as any in Euclid. Accordingly, we find a material sinking in tone; although he does not at once discard all imagery. The "Deep calleth unto deep" is nevertheless a great improvement upon his previous rhetoricianism. The personification of the waters above and below would be good in reference to any subject less august. The moral reflections which immediately follow, have at least the merit of simplicity; but the poet exhibits no very lofty imagination when he bases these reflections only upon the cataract's superiority to man *in the noise it can create;* nor is the concluding idea more spirited,

> To couch upon the grass and hear
> Niagara's everlasting voice
> Far in the deep blue West away;
> That dreamy and poetic noise
> We mark not in the glare of day—
> Oh, how unlike its torrent-cry
> When o'er the brink the tide is driven
> *As if the vast and sheeted sky*
> *In thunder fell from Heaven!*

where the mere difference between the quantity of water which occasioned the flood, and the quantity which Niagara precipitates, is made the measure of the Almighty Mind's superiority to that cataract which it called by a thought into existence.

But although "The Fall of Niagara" does not deserve all the unmeaning commendation it has received, there are, nevertheless, many truly beauti-

ful poems in this collection, and even more certain evidences of poetic power. "To a Child, the Daughter of a Friend" is exceedingly graceful and terse. "To the Dead" has equal grace, with more vigor, and, moreover, a touching air of melancholy. Its melody is very rich, and in the monotonous repetition, at each stanza, of a certain rhyme, we recognise a fantastic yet true imagination. "Mr. Merry's Lament for Long Tom" would be worthy of all praise were not its unusually beautiful rhythm an imitation from Campbell, who would deserve his high poetical rank, if only for its construction. Of the merely humorous pieces we have little to say. Such things are not *poetry*. Mr. Brainard excelled in them, and they are very good in their place; but that place is not in a collection of *poems*. The prevalent notions upon this head are extremely vague; yet we see no reason why any ambiguity should exist. Humor, with an exception to be made hereafter, is directly antagonistical to that which is the soul of the Muse proper; and the omni-prevalent belief, that melancholy is inseparable from the higher manifestations of the beautiful, is not without a firm basis in nature and in reason. But it so happens that humor and that quality which we have termed the soul of the Muse (imagination) are both essentially aided in their development by the same adventitious assistance—that of rhythm and of rhyme. Thus the only bond between humorous verse and poetry, properly so called, is that they employ in common, a certain tool. But this single circumstance has been sufficient to occasion, and to maintain through long ages, a confusion of two very distinct ideas in the brain of the unthinking critic. There is, nevertheless, an individual branch of humor which blends so happily with the ideal, that

from the union result some of the finest effects of legitimate poesy. We allude to what is termed "*archness*"—a trait with which popular feeling, which is unfailingly poetic, has invested, for example, the whole character of the fairy. In the volume before us there is a brief composition entitled "The Tree Toad" which will afford a fine exemplification of our idea. It seems to have been hurriedly constructed, as if its author had felt ashamed of his light labor. But that in his heart there was a secret exultation over these verses for which his reason found it difficult to account, *we know;* and there is not a really imaginative man within sound of our voice to-day, who, upon perusal of this little "Tree Toad" will not admit it to be one of the *truest poems* ever written by Brainard.

RUFUS DAWES

"AS a poet," says Mr. Griswold, in his "Poets and Poetry of America," "the standing of Mr. Dawes is as yet unsettled; there being a wide difference of opinion respecting his writings." The *width* of this difference is apparent; and, while to many it is matter for wonder, to those who have the interest of our Literature at heart, it is, more properly, a source of mortification and regret. That the author in question has long enjoyed what we term "a high poetical reputation," cannot be denied; and in no manner is this point more strikingly evinced than in the choice of his works, some two years since, by one of our most enterprising publishers, as the *initial* volume of a series, the avowed object of which was the setting forth, in the best array of paper, type, and pictorial embellishment, the *élite* of the American poets. As a writer of occasional stanzas he has been long before the public; always eliciting, from a great variety of sources, *unqualified* commendation. With the exception of a solitary remark, adventured by ourselves in "A Chapter on Autography," there has been no written dissent from the universal opinion in his favor—the universal *apparent* opinion. Mr. Griswold's observation must be understood, we presume, as referring to the *conversational* opinion upon this topic; or it is not impossible that he holds in view the difference between the criticism of the newspaper paragraphs and the private comment of the educated and intelligent. Be this as it may, the

rapidly growing "reputation" of our poet was much enhanced by the publication of his first compositions "of length," and attained its climax, we believe, upon the public recitation by himself, of a tragic drama, in five acts, entitled "Athenia of Damascus," to a large assembly of admiring and applauding *friends*, gathered together for the occasion in one of the halls of the University of New-York.

This popular decision, so frequent and so public, in regard to the poetical ability of Mr. Dawes, might be received as evidence of his actual merit (and by thousands it *is* so received) were it not too scandalously at variance with a species of criticism which *will not* be resisted—with the perfectly simple precepts of the very commonest common sense. The peculiarity of Mr. Griswold's observation has induced us to make inquiry into the true character of the volume to which we have before alluded, and which embraces, we believe, the chief portion of the published verse-compositions of its author.* This inquiry has but resulted in the confirmation of our previous opinion; and we now hesitate not to say, that no man in America has been more shamefully over-estimated than the one who forms the subject of this article. We say shamefully; for, though a better day is now dawning upon our literary interests, and a laudation so indiscriminate will never be sanctioned again—the laudation in this instance, as it stands upon record, must be regarded as a laughable although bitter satire upon the general zeal, accuracy and independence of that critical spirit which, but a few years ago, pervaded and degraded the land.

In what we shall say we have no intention of being

*"Geraldine," "Athenia of Damascus," and Miscellaneous Poems. By Rufus Dawes. Published by Samuel Colman, New-York.

profound. Here is a case in which anything like analysis would be utterly thrown away. Our purpose (which is truth) will be more fully answered by an unvarnished exposition of fact. It appears to us, indeed, that in excessive *generalization* lies one of the leading errors of a criticism employed upon a poetical literature so immature as our own. We rhapsodize rather than discriminate; delighting more in the dictation or discussion of a principle, than in its particular and methodical application. The wildest and most erratic effusion of the Muse, not utterly worthless, will be found more or less indebted to *method* for whatever of value it embodies; and we shall discover, conversely, that, in any analysis of even the wildest effusion, we labor without method only to labor without end. There is little reason for that vagueness of comment which, of late, we so pertinaciously affect, and which has been brought into fashion, no doubt, through the proverbial facility and security of merely general remark. In regard to the leading principles of true poesy, these, we think, stand not at all in need of the elucidation hourly wasted upon them. Founded in the unerring instincts of our nature, they are enduring and immutable. In a rigid scrutiny of any number of directly conflicting opinions upon a poetical topic, we will not fail to perceive that principles identical in every important point have been, in each opinion, either asserted, or intimated, or unwittingly allowed an influence. The differences of decision arose simply from those of application; and from such variety in the applied, rather than in the conceived idea, sprang, undoubtedly, the absurd distinctions of the "schools."

"*Geraldine*" is the title of the first and longest poem in the volume before us. It embraces some

three hundred and fifty stanzas—the whole being a most servile imitation of the "Don Juan" of Lord Byron. The outrageous absurdity of the systematic *digression* in the British original, was so managed as to form not a little portion of its infinite interest and humor; and the fine discrimination of the writer pointed out to him a limit beyond which he never ventured with this tantalizing species of drollery. "Geraldine" may be regarded, however, as a simple embodiment of the whole soul of digression. It is a mere mass of irrelevancy, amid the mad *farrago* of which we detect with difficulty even the faintest vestige of a narrative, and where the continuous lapse from impertinence to impertinence is seldom justified by any shadow of appositeness or even of the commonest relation.

To afford the reader any proper conception of the *story*, is of course a matter of difficulty; we must content ourselves with a mere outline of the general conduct. This we shall endeavor to give without indulgence in those feelings of risibility stirred up in us by the primitive perusal. We shall rigorously avoid every species of exaggeration, and confine ourselves, with perfect honesty, to the conveyance of a distinct image.

"Geraldine," then, opens with some four or five stanzas descriptive of a sylvan scene in America. We could, perhaps, render Mr. Dawes' poetical reputation no greater service than by the quotation of these simple verses in full.

I know a spot where poets fain would dwell,
To gather flowers and food for after thought,
As bees draw honey from the rose's cell,
To hive among the treasures they have wrought;
And there a cottage from a sylvan screen
Sent up a curling smoke amidst the green.

Around that hermit home of quietude
The elm trees whispered with the summer air,
And nothing ever ventured to intrude
But happy birds that caroled wildly there,
Or honey-laden harvesters that flew
Humming away to drink the morning dew.

Around the door the honey-suckle climbed
And Multa-flora spread her countless roses,
And never poet sang nor minstrel rhymed
Romantic scene where happiness reposes,
Sweeter to sense than that enchanting dell
Where home-sick memory fondly loves to dwell.

Beneath the mountain's brow the cottage stood
Hard by a shelving lake whose pebbled bed
Was skirted by the drapery of a wood
That hung its festoon foliage over head,
Where wild deer came at eve unharmed, to drink,
While moonlight threw their shadows from the brink.

The green earth heaved her giant waves around,
Where, through the mountain vista, one vast height
Towered heavenward without peer, his forehead bound
With gorgeous clouds, at times of changeful light,
While, far below, the lake in bridal rest
Slept with his glorious picture on her breast.

Here is an air of quietude in good keeping with the theme; the "giant waves" in the last stanzas redeem it from much exception otherwise; and perhaps we need say nothing at all of the suspicious-looking compound "mult*a*-flora." Had Mr. Dawes always written even nearly so well, we should have been spared to-day the painful task imposed upon us by a stern sense of our critical duty. These passages are followed immediately by an address or invocation to "Peerless America," including apostrophes to Allston and Claude Lorraine.

We now learn the name of the tenant of the cot-

tage, which is *Wilton*, and ascertain that he has an only daughter. A single stanza quoted at this juncture will aid the reader's conception of the queer tone of philosophical rhapsody with which the poem teems, and some specimen of which is invariably made to follow each little modicum of incident.

> How like the heart is to an instrument
> A touch can wake to gladness or to woe!
> How like the circumambient element
> The spirit with its undulating flow!
> The heart—the soul—Oh, Mother Nature, why
> This universal bond of sympathy.

After two pages much in this manner, we are told that *Geraldine* is the name of the maiden, and are informed, with comparatively little circumlocution, of her character. She is beautiful, and kind-hearted, and somewhat romantic, and "some thought her reason touched"—for which we have little disposition to blame them. There is now much about Kant and Fichte; about Schelling, Hegel and Cousin; (which latter is made to rhyme with *gang;*) about Milton, Byron, Homer, Spinoza, David Hume, and Mirabeau; and a good deal, too, about the *scribendi cacoëthes*, in which an evident misunderstanding of the quantity of *cacoëthes* brings, again, into very disagreeable suspicion the writer's cognizance of the Latin tongue. At this point we may refer, also, to such absurdities as

> Truth with her thousand-folded robe of error
> Close shut in her *sarcophagi* of terror—

And

> Where *candelabri* silver the white halls.

Now, no one is presupposed to be cognizant of any language beyond his own; to be ignorant of Latin is no crime; to pretend a knowledge is beneath contempt; and the pretender will attempt in vain to utter or to write two consecutive phrases of a foreign idiom, without betraying his deficiency to those who are conversant.

At page 39, there is some prospect of a progress in the story. Here we are introduced to a Mr. Acus and his fair daughter, Miss Alice.

> Acus had been a dashing Bond-street tailor
> Some few short years before, who took his measures
> So carefully he always cut the jailor
> And filled his coffers with exhaustless treasures;
> Then with his wife, a son, and three fair daughters,
> He sunk the goose and straightway crossed the waters.

His residence is in the immediate vicinity of Wilton. The daughter, Miss Alice, who is said to be quite a belle, is enamored of one Waldron, a foreigner, a lion, and a gentleman of questionable reputation. His character (which for our life and soul we cannot comprehend) is given within the space of some forty or fifty stanzas, made to include, at the same time, an essay on motives, deduced from the text "whatever is must be," and illuminated by a long note at the end of the poem, wherein the *systime* (quere *systéme?*) de *la Nature* is sturdily attacked. Let us speak the truth: this note (and the whole of them, for there are many,) may be regarded as a glorious specimen of the concentrated essence of rigmarole, and, to say nothing of their utter absurdity *per se*, are so ludicrously uncalled for, and grotesquely out of place, that we found it impossible to refrain, during their perusal, from a most unbecoming and uproarious guffaw. We will be par-

doned for giving a specimen—selecting it for its brevity.

> Reason, he deemed, could measure everything,
> And reason told him that there was a law
> Of mental action which must ever fling
> A death-bolt at all faith, and this he saw
> Was Transference. (14)

Turning to Note 14, we read thus—

"If any one has a curiosity to look into this subject, (does Mr. Dawes *really* think any one so great a fool?) and wishes to see how far the force of reasoning and analysis may carry him, independently of revelation, I would suggest (thank you, sir,) such inquiries as the following:

"Whether the first Philosophy, considered in relation to Physics, was first in time?

"How far our moral perceptions have been influenced by natural phenomena?

"How far our metaphysical notions of cause and effect are attributable to the transference of notions connected with logical language?"

And all this in a poem about Acus, a tailor!

Waldron prefers, unhappily, Geraldine to Alice, and Geraldine returns his love, exciting thus the deep indignation of the neglected fair one,

> whom love and jealousy bear up
> To mingle poison in her rival's cup.

Miss A. has among her adorers one of the genus loafer, whose appellation, not improperly, is Bore. B. is acquainted with a milliner—the milliner of the disconsolate lady.

> She made this milliner her friend, who swore,
> To work her full revenge through Mr. Bore.

And now says the poet—

I leave your sympathetic fancies,
To fill the outline of this pencil sketch.

This filling has been, with us at least, a matter of no little difficulty. We believe, however, that the affair is intended to run thus:—Waldron is enticed to some vile sins by Bore, and the knowledge of these, on the part of Alice, places the former gentleman in her power.

We are now introduced to a *fête champêtre* at the residence of Acus, who, by the way, has a son, Clifford, a suitor to Geraldine with the approbation of her father—that good old gentleman, for whom our sympathies were excited in the beginning of things, being influenced by the consideration that this scion of the house of the tailor will inherit a plum. The worst of the whole is, however, that the romatic Geraldine, who should have known better, and who loves Waldron, loves also the young knight of the shears. The consequence is a rencontre of the rival suitors at the *fête champêtre;* Waldron knocking his antagonist on the head, and throwing him into the lake. The murderer, as well as we can make out the narrative, now joins a piratical band, among whom he alternately cuts throats and sings songs of his own composition. In the mean time the deserted Geraldine mourns alone, till, upon a certain day,

A shape stood by her like a thing of air—
She started—Waldron's haggard face was there.

. . . . . .

He laid her gently down, of sense bereft,
And sunk her picture on her bosom's snow,
And close beside these lines in blood he left:
"Farewell forever, Geraldine, I go
Another woman's victim—dare I tell?
'Tis Alice!—curse us, Geraldine!—farewell!"

There is no possibility of denying the fact: this *is* a droll piece of business. The lover brings forth a miniature, (Mr. Dawes has a passion for miniatures,) *sinks* it in the bosom of the lady, cuts his finger, and writes with the blood an epistle, (*where* is not specified, but we presume he indites it upon the bosom as it is "close beside" the picture,) in which epistle he announces that he is "another woman's victim," giving us to understand that he himself is a woman after all, and concluding with the delicious bit of Billingsgate

dare I tell?
'Tis Alice!—curse us, Geraldine!—farewell!

We suppose, however, that "curse us" is a misprint; for why should Geraldine curse both herself and her lover?—it should have been "curse it!" no doubt. The whole passage, perhaps, would have read better thus—

oh, my eye!
'Tis Alice!—d—n it. Geraldine!—good bye!

The remainder of the narrative may be briefly summed up. Waldron returns to his professional engagements with the pirates, while Geraldine, attended by her father, goes to sea for the benefit of her health. The consequence is inevitable. The vessels of the separated lovers meet and engage in the most diabolical of conflicts. Both are all blown to pieces. In a boat from one vessel, Waldron escapes—in a boat from the other, the lady Geraldine. Now, as a second natural consequence, the parties meet again—Destiny is every thing in such cases. Well, the parties meet again. The lady Geraldine has "that miniature" about her neck, and the circumstance proves too much for the excited state of

mind of Mr. Waldron. He just seizes her ladyship, therefore, by the small of the waist and incontinently leaps with her into the sea.

However intolerably absurd this skeleton of the story may appear, a thorough perusal will convince the reader that the entire fabric is even more so. It is impossible to convey, in any such digest as we have given, a full idea of the *niaiseries* with which the narrative abounds. An utter want of *keeping* is especially manifest throughout. In the most solemnly serious passages we have, for example, incidents of the world of 1839, jumbled up with the distorted mythology of the Greeks. Our conclusion of the drama, as we just gave it, was perhaps ludicrous enough; but how much more preposterous does it appear in the grave language of the poet himself!

> And round her neck the miniature was hung
> Of him who gazed with Hell's unmingled wo;
> He saw her, kissed her cheek, and wildly flung
> His arms around her with a mad'ning throw—
> Then plunged within the cold unfathomed deep
> While sirens sang their victim to his sleep!

Only think of a group of *sirens* singing to sleep a modern "miniatured" flirt, kicking about in the water with a New York dandy in tight pantaloons!

But not even these stupidities would suffice to justify a total condemnation of the poetry of Mr. Dawes. We have known follies very similar committed by men of real ability, and have been induced to disregard them in earnest admiration of the brilliancy of the minor beauty of *style*. Simplicity, perspicuity and vigor, or a well-disciplined ornateness of language, have done wonders for the reputation of many a writer really deficient in the higher and more essential qualities of the Muse. But

upon these minor points of manner our poet has not even the shadow of a shadow to sustain him. His works, in this respect, may be regarded as a theatrical world of mere verbiage, somewhat speciously bedizzened with a tinselly meaning well adapted to the eyes of the rabble. There is not a page of anything that he has written which will bear, for an instant, the scrutiny of a critical eye. Exceedingly fond of the glitter of metaphor, he has not the capacity to manage it, and, in the awkward attempt, jumbles together the most incongruous of ornament. Let us take any passage of "Geraldine" by way of exemplification.

> ———Thy rivers swell the sea—
> In one eternal diapason pour
> Thy cataracts the hymn of liberty,
> Teaching the clouds to thunder.

Here we have cataracts teaching clouds to thunder—and how? By means of a hymn.

> Why should chromatic discord charm the ear
> And smiles and tears stream o'er with troubled joy?

Tears may stream over, but not smiles.

> Then comes the breathing time of young Romance,
> The June of life, when summer's earliest ray
> Warms the red arteries, that bound and dance
> With soft voluptuous impulses at play,
> While the full heart sends forth as from a hive
> A thousand winged messengers alive.

Let us reduce this to a simple statement, and we have—what? The earliest ray of summer warming red arteries, which are bounding and dancing, and playing with a parcel of urchins, called voluptuous impulses, while the bee-hive of a heart attached to

these dancing arteries is at the same time sending forth a swarm of its innocent little inhabitants.

> The eyes were like the sapphire of deep air,
> The garb that distance robes elysium in,
> But oh, so much of heaven lingered there
> The wayward heart forgot its blissful sin
> And worshipped all Religion well forbids
> Beneath the silken fringes of their lids.

That *distance* is *not* the cause of the sapphire of the sky, is not to our present purpose. We wish merely to call attention to the verbiage of the stanza. It is impossible to put the latter portion of it into anything like intelligible prose. So much of heaven lingered in the lady's eyes that the wayward heart forgot its blissful sin, and worshiped everything which religion forbids, beneath the silken fringes of the lady's eyelids. This we cannot be compelled to understand, and shall therefore say nothing further about it.

> She loved to lend Imagination wing
> And link her heart with Juliet's in a dream,
> And feel the music of a sister string
> That thrilled the current of her vital stream.

How delightful a picture we have here! A lady is lending one of her wings to the spirit, or genius, called Imagination, who, of course, has lost one of his own. While thus employed with one hand, with the other she is chaining her heart to the heart of the fair Juliet. At the same time she is feeling the music of a sister string, and this string is thrilling the current of the lady's vital stream. If this is downright nonsense we cannot be held responsible for its perpetration; it is but the downright nonsense of Mr. Dawes.

Again—

> Without the Palinurus of self-science
> Byron embarked upon the stormy sea,
> To adverse breezes hurling his defiance
> And dashing up the rainbows on his lee,
> And chasing those he made in wildest mirth,
> Or sending back their images to earth.

This stanza we have more than once seen quoted as a fine specimen of the poetical powers of our author. His lordship, no doubt, is herein made to cut a very remarkable figure. Let us imagine him, for one moment, embarked upon a stormy sea, hurling his defiance, (literally throwing his gauntlet or glove,) to the adverse breezes, dashing up rain bows on his lee, laughing at them, and chasing them at the same time, and, in conclusion, "sending back their images to earth." But we have already wearied the reader with this abominable rigmarole. We shall be pardoned, (after the many specimens thus given at random), for not carrying out the design we originally intended: that of commenting upon two or three successive pages of "*Geraldine*," with a view of showing, (in a spirit apparently more fair than that of particular selection,) the *entireness* with which the whole poem is pervaded by unintelligibility. To every thinking mind, however, this would seem a work of supererogation. In such matters, by such understandings, the brick of the *skolastikos* will be received implicitly as a sample of the house. The writer *capable*, to any extent, of such absurdity as we have pointed out, *cannot*, by any possibility, produce a long article worth reading. We say this in the very teeth of the magnificent assembly which listened to the recital of Mr. Dawes, in the great hall of the University of New York. We shall leave "Athenia of Damascus," without comment, to the

decision of those who may find time and temper for its perusal, and conclude our extracts by a quotation, from among the minor poems, of the following very respectable

ANACREONTIC

Fill again the mantling bowl
  Nor fear to meet the morning breaking!
None but slaves should bend the soul
  Beneath the chains of mortal making:
Fill your beakers to the brim,
  Bacchus soon shall lull your sorrow;
    Let delight
    But crown the night,
  And care may bring her clouds to-morrow.

Mark this cup of rosy wine
  With virgin pureness deeply blushing;
Beauty pressed it from the vine
  While Love stood by to charm its gushing;
He who dares to drain it now
  Shall drink such bliss as seldom gladdens;
    The Moslem's dream
    Would joyless seem
  To him whose brain its rapture maddens.

Pleasure sparkles on the brim—
  Lethe lies far deeper in it—
Both, enticing, wait for him
  Whose heart is warm enough to win it;
Hearts like ours, if e'er they chill
  Soon with love again must lighten.
    Skies may wear
    A darksome air
  Where sunshine most is known to brighten.

Then fill, fill high the mantling bowl!
  Nor fear to meet the morning breaking;
Care shall never cloud the soul
  While Beauty's beaming eyes are waking.

Fill your beakers to the brim,
Bacchus soon shall lull your sorrow;
Let delight
But crown the night,
And care may bring her clouds to-morrow.

Whatever shall be, hereafter, the position of Mr. Dawes in the poetical world, he will be indebted for it altogether to his shorter compositions, some of which have the merit of tenderness; others of melody and force. What seems to be the popular opinion in respect to his more voluminous effusions, has been brought about, in some measure, by a certain general *tact*, nearly amounting to taste, and more nearly the converse of talent. This tact has been especially displayed in the choice of not inelegant titles and other externals; in a peculiar imitative speciousness of manner, pervading the surface of his writings; and, (here we have the anomaly of a positive benefit deduced from a radical defect,) in an absolute deficiency in basis, in *stamen*, in matter, or pungency, which, if even slightly evinced, might have invited the reader to an intimate and understanding perusal, whose result would have been disgust. His poems have not been condemned, only because they have never been read. The glitter upon the surface has sufficed, with the newspaper critic, to justify his hyperboles of praise.

Very few persons, we feel assured, have had sufficient nerve to wade *through* the entire volume now in question, except, as in our own case, with the single object of criticism in view. Mr. Dawes has, also, been aided to a poetical reputation by the amiability of his character as a man. How efficient such causes have before been in producing such effects, is a point but too thoroughly understood.

We have already spoken of the numerous *friends*

of the poet; and we shall not here insist upon the fact, that *we* bear him no personal ill-will. With those who know us, such a declaration would appear supererogatory; and by those who know us not, it would, doubtless, be received with incredulity. What we have said, however, is *not* in opposition to Mr. Dawes, nor even so much in opposition to the poems of Mr. Dawes, as in defence of the many true souls which, in Mr. Dawes' apotheosis are aggrieved. The laudation of the unworthy is to the worthy the most bitter of all wrong. But it is unbecoming in him who merely demonstrates a truth, to offer reason or apology for the demonstration.

FLACCUS—THOMAS WARD

THE poet now comprehended in the *cognomen* Flaccus, is by no means our ancient friend Quintus Horatius, nor even his ghost, but merely a Mr.—— Ward, of Gotham, once a contributor to the New York "American," and to the New York "Knickerbocker" Magazine. He is characterized by Mr. Griswold, in his "Poets and Poetry of America," as a gentleman of elegant leisure.

What there is in "elegant leisure" so much at war with the divine *afflatus*, it is not very difficult, but quite unnecessary, to say. The *fact* has been long apparent. Never sing the Nine so well as when penniless. The *mens divinior* is one thing, and the *otium cum dignitate* quite another.

Of course Mr. Ward is not, as a poet, altogether destitute of merit. If so, the public had been spared these paragraphs. But the sum of his deserts has been footed up by a *clique* who are in the habit of reckoning units as tens in all cases where champagne and "elegant leisure" are concerned. We do not consider him, at all points, a Pop Emmons, but, with deference to the more matured opinions of the "Knickerbocker," we may be permitted to entertain a doubt whether he is either Jupiter Tonans, or Phœbus Apollo.

Justice is not, at all times, to all persons, the most desirable thing in the world, but then there is the old adage about the tumbling of the heavens, and *simple* justice is all that we propose in the case of Mr. Ward. We have *no* design to be bitter. We notice his book

at all, only because it is an unusually large one of its kind, because it is here lying upon our table, and because, whether justly or unjustly, whether for good reason or for none, it has attracted some portion of the attention of the public.

The volume is entitled, somewhat affectedly, "Passaic, a Group of Poems touching that river: with Other Musings, by Flaccus," and embodies, we believe, all the previously published effusions of its author. It commences with a very pretty "Sonnet to Passaic," and from the second poem, "Introductory Musings on Rivers," we are happy in being able to quote an entire page of even remarkable beauty.

> Beautiful Rivers! that adown the vale
> With graceful passage journey to the deep,
> Let me along your grassy marge recline
> At ease, and, musing, meditate the strange
> Bright history of your life; yes, from your birth
> Has beauty's shadow chased your every step:
> The blue sea was your mother, and the sun
> Your glorious sire, clouds your voluptuous cradle,
> Roofed with o'erarching rainbows; and your fall
> To earth was cheered with shouts of happy birds,
> With brightened faces of reviving flowers,
> And meadows, while the sympathizing west
> Took holiday, and donn'd her richest robes.
> From deep mysterious wanderings your springs
> Break bubbling into beauty; where they lie
> In infant helplessness awhile, but soon
> Gathering in tiny brooks, they gambol down
> The steep sides of the mountain, laughing, shouting,
> Teasing the wild flowers, and at every turn
> Meeting new playmates still to swell their ranks;
> Which, with the rich increase resistless grown,
> Shed foam and thunder, that the echoing wood
> Rings with the boisterous glee; while, o'er their head
> Catching their spirit blithe, young rainbows sport,
> The frolic children of the wanton sun.

Nor is your swelling prime, or green old age,
Though calm, unlovely; still, where'er ye move,
Your train is beauty; trees stand grouping by,
To mark your graceful progress; giddy flowers
And vain, as beauties wont, stoop o'er the verge
To greet their faces in your flattering glass;
The thirsty herd are following at your side;
And water-birds in clustering fleets convoy
Your sea-bound tides; and jaded man, released
From worldly thralldom, here his dwelling plants—
Here pauses in your pleasant neighborhood,
Sure of repose along your tranquil shores;
And, when your end approaches, and ye blend
With the eternal ocean, ye shall fade
As placidly as when an infant dies,
And the Death-Angel shall your powers withdraw
Gently as twilight takes the parting day,
And, with a soft and gradual decline
That cheats the senses, lets it down to night.

There is nothing very *original* in all this; the general idea is perhaps the most absolutely trite in poetical literature; but the theme is not the less just on this account, while we must confess that it is admirably handled. The picture embodied in the whole of the concluding paragraph is perfect. The seven final lines convey not only a novel but a highly appropriate and beautiful image.

What follows, of this poem, however, is by no means worthy so fine a beginning. Instead of confining himself to the true poetical thesis, the Beauty or the Sublimity of river scenery, he descends into mere meteorology—into the uses and general philosophy of rain, &c.—matters which should be left to Mr. Espy, who knows something about them, as we are sorry to say Mr. Flaccus does *not*.

The second and chief *poem* in the volume, is entitled "The Great Descender." We emphasize the "poem" merely by way of suggesting that the

"Great Descender" is anything else. We never could understand what pleasure men of talent can take in concocting elaborate doggerel of this order. Least of all can we comprehend why, having perpetrated the atrocity, they should place it at the door of the Muse. We are at a loss to know by what right, human or divine, twattle of this character is intruded into a collection of what professes to be *Poetry*. We put it to Mr. Ward, in all earnestness, if the "Great Descender," which is a history of Sam Patch, has a single attribute, beyond that of mere versification, in common with what even Sam Patch himself would have had the hardihood to denominate a poem.

Let us call this thing a rhymed *jeu d'esprit*, a burlesque, or what not?—and even so called and judged by its new name, we must still regard it as a failure. Even in the loosest compositions we demand a certain degree of *keeping*. But in the "Great Descender" none is apparent. The *tone* is unsteady—fluctuating between the grave and the gay—and never being precisely either. Thus there is a failure in both. The intention being never rightly *taken*, we are of course never exactly in condition either to weep or to laugh.

We do not pretend to be the Oracles of Dodona, but it does really appear to us that Mr. Flaccus intended the whole matter, in the first instance, as a solemnly serious thing; and that, having composed it in a grave vein, he became apprehensive of its exciting derision and so interwove sundry touches of the burlesque, behind whose equivocal aspect, he might shelter himself at need. In no other supposition can we reconcile the *spotty* appearance of the whole with a belief in the sanity of the author. It is difficult also in any other view of the case, to

appreciate the air of positive gravity with which he descants upon the advantages to *Science* which have accrued from a man's making a frog of himself. Mr. Ward is frequently pleased to denominate Mr. Patch "a martyr of science," and appears very doggedly in earnest in all passages such as the following:

> Through the glad Heavens, which tempests now conceal,
> Deep thunder-guns in quick succession peal,
> As if salutes were firing from the sky,
> To hail the triumph and the victory.
> Shout! trump of Fame, till thy brass lungs burst out!
> Shout! mortal tongues! deep-throated thunders, shout!
> For lo! electric *genius*, downward hurled,
> Has startled *Science*, and illumed the world!

That Mr. Patch was a *genius* we do not doubt; so is Mr. Ward; but the *science* displayed in jumping down the Falls, is a point above us. There might have been some science in jumping *up*.

"The Worth of Beauty; or a Lover's Journal," is the title of the poem next in place and importance. Of this composition Mr. W. thus speaks in a Note: "The individual to whom the present poem relates, and who had suffered severely all the pains and penalties which arise from the want of those personal charms so much admired by him in others, gave the author, many years since, some fragments of a journal kept in his early days, in which he had bared his heart, and set down all his thoughts and feelings. This prose journal has here been transplanted into the richer soil of verse."

The narrative of the friend of Mr. Flaccus must, originally, have been a very good thing. By "originally," we mean before it had the misfortune to be "transplanted in the richer soil of verse"—which has by no means agreed with its constitution. But, even through the dense fog of our author's

rhythm, we can get an occasional glimpse of its merit. It must have been the work of a heart on fire with passion, and the utter *abandon* of the details, reminds us even of Jean Jacques. But alas for this "richer soil!" *Can* we venture to present our readers with a specimen?

> Now roses blush, and violets' eyes,
> And seas reflect the glance of skies;
> And now *that frolic pencil* streaks
> With quaintest tints the tulips' cheeks;
> Now jewels bloom in secret worth,
> Like blossoms of the inner earth;
> Now painted birds are pouring round
> The beauty and the wealth of sound;
> Now sea-shells glance with quivering ray,
> Too rare to seize, too fleet to stay,
> And hues out-dazzling all the rest
> Are dashed profusely on the west,
> While rainbows seem to palettes changed,
> Whereon the motley tints are ranged.
> But soft the moon *that pencil* tipped,
> As though, in liquid radiance dipped,
> A likeness of the sun it drew,
> But flattered him with pearlier hue;
> Which haply spilling runs astray,
> And blots with light the milky way;
> While stars besprinkle all the air,
> Like spatterings of *that pencil* there.

All this by way of *exalting* the subject. The moon is made a painter, and the rainbow a palette. And the moon has a pencil (*that* pencil!) which she dips, by way of a brush, in the liquid radiance (the colors on a palette are *not* liquid,) and then *draws* (not paints) a likeness of the sun; but, in the attempt, plasters him too "pearly," puts it on too thick; the consequence of which is that some of the paint is spilt, and "runs astray" and besmears the milky way, and "spatters" the rest of the sky with stars!

We can only say that a very singular picture was spoilt in the making.

The *versification* of the "Worth of Beauty" proceeds much after this fashion; we select a fair example of the whole from page 43.

> Yes! pangs have cut my soul with grief
> So keen that gashes were relief,
> And racks have rung my spirit-frame
> To which the strain of joints were tame
> And battle strife itself were nought
> Beside the inner fight I've fought. etc., etc.

Nor do we regard any portion of it (so far as rhythm is concerned) as at all comparable to some of the better ditties of William Slater. Here, for example, from his Psalms, published in 1642:

> The righteous shall his sorrow scan
> And laugh at him, and say "behold
> What hath become of this here man
> That on his riches was so bold."

And here, again, are lines from the edition of the same Psalms, by Archbishop Parker, which we most decidedly prefer:

> Who sticketh to God in sable trust
> As Sion's mount he stands full just,
> Which moveth no whit nor yet can reel,
> But standeth forever as stiff as steel.

"The Martyr" and the "Retreat of Seventy-Six" are merely Revoluntionary incidents "done into verse," and spoilt in the doing. "The Retreat" begins with the remarkable line.

> Tramp! tramp! tramp! tramp!

which is elsewhere introduced into the poem. We

look in vain, here, for anything worth even qualified commendation.

"The Diary" is a record of events occurring to the author during a voyage from New York to Havre. Of these events a fit of sea-sickness is the chief. Mr. Ward, we believe, is the first of the *genus irritable* who has ventured to treat so delicate a subject with that grave dignity which is its due:

> Rejoice! rejoice! already on my sight
> Bright shores, gray towers, and coming wonders reel;
> My brain grows giddy—is it with delight?
> A swimming faintness, such as one might feel
> When stabbed and dying, gathers on my sense—
> It weighs me down—and now—help!—horror!—

But the "horror," and indeed all that ensues, we must leave to the fancy of the poetical.

Some pieces entitled "Humorous" next succeed, and one or two of them (for example, "The Graham System" and "The Bachelor's Lament") are not so *very* contemptible in their way, but the way itself is beneath even contempt.

"To an Infant in Heaven" embodies some striking thoughts, and, although feeble as a whole, and terminating lamely, may be cited as the best composition in the volume. We quote two or three of the opening stanzas:

> Thou bright and star-like spirit!
> That in my visions wild
> I see 'mid heaven's seraphic host—
> Oh! canst thou be my child?
>
> My grief is quenched in wonder,
> And pride arrests my sighs;
> A branch from this unworthy stock
> Now blossoms in the skies.

Our hopes of thee were lofty,
But have we cause to grieve?
Oh! could our fondest, proudest wish
A nobler fate conceive?

The little weeper tearless!
The sinner snatched from sin!
The babe to more than manhood grown,
Ere childhood did begin!

And I, thy earthly teacher,
Would blush thy powers to see
Thou art to me a parent now,
And I a child to thee!

There are several other pieces in the book—but it is needless to speak of them in detail. Among them we note one or two political effusions, and one or two which are (satirically?) termed satirical. All are worthless.

Mr. Ward's *imagery*, at detached points, has occasional vigor and appropriateness; we may go so far as to say that, at times, it is strikingly beautiful—by accident of course. Let us cite a few instances. At page 53 we read—

O! happy day!—earth, sky is fair,
And fragrance floats along the air;
For all the bloomy orchards glow
As with a fall of rosy snow.

At page 91—

How flashed the overloaded flowers
With gems, a present from the showers

At page 92—

No! there is danger; all the night
I saw her like a starry light
More lovely in my visions lone
Than in my day-dreams truth she shone.

'Tis naught when on the sun we gaze
If only dazzled by his rays,
But when our eyes his form retain
Some wound to vision must remain.

And again, at page 234, speaking of a slight shock of an earthquake, the earth is said to tremble

As if some wing of passing angel, bound
From sphere to sphere, had brushed the golden chain
That hangs our planet to the throne of God.

This latter passage, however, is, perhaps, not altogether original with Mr. Ward. In a poem now lying before us, entitled "Al Aaraaf," the composition of a gentleman of Philadelphia, we find what follows:

A dome by link'd light from heaven let down
Sat gently on these columns as a crown;
A window of one circular diamond there
Looked out above into the purple air,
And rays from God shot down that meteor chain
And hallow'd all the beauty twice again,
Save when, between th' Empyrean and that ring,
Some eager spirit flapped his dusky wing.

But if Mr. Ward's imagery is, indeed, at rare intervals, good, it must be granted, on the other hand, that, in general, it is atrociously inappropriate, or low. For example:

Thou gaping chasm! whose wide devouring throat
Swallows a river, *while the gulping note*
Of monstrous deglutition gurgles loud, etc. *Page* 24.
Bright Beauty! child of starry birth,
The grace, the gem, the flower of earth
The *damask livery* of Heaven! *Page* 44.

Here the mind wavers between gems, and stars, and taffety—between footmen and flowers. Again, at page 46—

All thornless flowers of wit, all chaste
And delicate essays of taste,
All playful fancies, winged wiles,
That from their pinions scatter smiles,
All prompt resource in stress or pain,
Leap ready-armed from woman's brain.

The idea of "thornless flowers," etc., leaping "*ready-armed*" could have entered few brains except those of Mr. Ward.

Of the most ineffable *bad taste* we have instances without number. For example—page 183—

And, straining, fastens on her lips a kiss
That seemed to *suck the life-blood from her heart!*

And here, very gravely, at page 25—

Again he's rous'd, *first cramming in his cheek*
The weed, though vile, that props the nerves when weak.

Here again, at page 33—

Full well he knew where food does not refresh,
The shrivel'd soul sinks inward with the flesh—
That he's best armed for danger's rash career,
Who's crammed so full there is no room for fear.

But we doubt if the whole world of literature, poetical or prosaic, can afford a picture more utterly *disgusting* than the following, which we quote from page 177:

But most of all good eating cheers the brain,
Where other joys are rarely met—at sea—
Unless, indeed, we lose as soon as gain—
Ay, there's the rub, so baffling oft to me.
Boiled, roast, and baked—*what precious choice of dishes*
My generous throat has shared among the fishes!

'Tis sweet to leave, in each forsaken spot,
Our foot-prints there—if only in the sand;
'Tis sweet to feel we are not all forgot,
That some will weep our flight from every land;
And sweet the knowledge, when the seas I cross,
My briny messmates! ye will mourn my loss.

This passage alone should damn the book—ay, damn a dozen such.

Of what may be termed the *niaiseries*—the silliNesses—of the volume, there is no end. Under this head we might quote two thirds of the work. For example:

Now lightning, with convulsive spasm
Splits heaven *in many a* fearful chasm....

It takes the high trees by the hair
And, as with *besoms*, sweeps the air.....
Now breaks the gloom and through the *chinks*
The moon, in search of opening, *winks*—

All seriously urged, at different points of page 66. Again, on the very next page—

Bees buzzed and wrens that throng'd the rushes
Poured round incessant twittering gushes.

And here, at page 129—

And now he leads her to the slippery brink
Where ponderous tides headlong plunge down
the horrid *chink*.

And here, page 109—

And, like a ravenous vulture, *peck*
The smoothness of that cheek and neck.

And here, page 111—

While through the skin worms *wriggling* broke.

And here, page 170—

> And ride the *skittish* backs of untamed waves.

And here, page 214—

> Now clasps its mate in holy prayer
> Or *twangs* a harp of gold.

Mr. Ward, also, is constantly talking about "thunder-guns," "thunder-trumpets," and "thunder-shrieks." He has a bad habit, too, of styling an eye "a weeper," as for example, at page 208—

> Oh, curl in smiles that mouth again
> And wipe that *weeper* dry.

Somewhere else he calls two tears "two sparklers" —very much in the style of Mr. Richard Swiveller, who was fond of denominating Madeira "the rosy." "In the nick," meaning in the height, or fulness, is likewise a pet expression of the author of "The Great Descender." Speaking of American forests at page 286, for instance, he says, "let the doubter walk through them in the nick of their glory." A phrase which may be considered as in the very nick of good taste.

We cannot pause to comment upon Mr. Ward's most extraordinary system of versification. *Is* it his own? He has quite an original way of conglomerating consonants, and seems to have been experimenting whether it were not possible to do altogether without vowels. Sometimes he strings together quite a chain of impossibilities. The line, for example, at page 51,

> Or, only such as sea-shells flash,

puts us much in mind of the schoolboy stumbling-block, beginning, "The cat ran up the ladder with a lump of raw liver in her mouth," and we defy Sam

Patch himself to pronounce it twice in succession without tumbling into a blunder.

But we are fairly wearied with this absurd theme. *Who* calls Mr. Ward a poet? He is a second-rate, or a third-rate, or perhaps a ninety-ninth-rate poet-aster. He is a gentleman of "elegant leisure," and gentlemen of elegant leisure are, for the most part, neither men, women, nor Harriet Martineaus. Similar opinions, we believe, were expressed by somebody else—was it Mr. Benjamin?—no very long while ago. But neither Mr. Ward nor "The Knickerbocker" would be convinced. The latter, by way of defence, went into a treatise upon Sam Patch, and Mr. Ward, "in the nick of his glory," wrote another poem against criticism in general, in which he called Mr. Benjamin "a wasp" and "an owl," and endeavored to prove him an ass. An owl is a wise bird—especially in spectacles—still, we do not look upon Mr. Benjamin as an owl. If all are owls who disbelieve in this book, (which we now throw to the pigs) then the world at large cuts a pretty figure, indeed, and should be burnt up in April, as Mr. Miller desires—for it is only one immense aviary of owls.

WILLIAM W. LORD*

OF MR. LORD we know nothing—although we believe that he is a student at Princeton College—or perhaps a graduate, or perhaps a Professor of that institution. Of his book, lately, we have heard a good deal—that is to say, we have heard it announced in every possible variation of phrase, as "forthcoming." For several months past, indeed, much amusement has been occasioned in the various literary coteries in New York, by the pertinacity and obviousness of an attempt made by the poet's friends to get up an anticipatory excitement in his favor. There were multitudinous dark rumors of something *in posse*—whispered insinuations that the sun had at length arisen or would certainly arise—that a book was really in press which would revolutionize the poetical world—that the MS. had been submitted to the inspection of a junto of critics, whose fiat was well understood to be Fate, (Mr. Charles King, if we remember aright, forming one of the junto)—that the work had by them been approved, and its successful reception and illimitable glorification assured.—Mr. Longfellow, in consequence, countermanding an order given his publishers (Redding & Co.,) to issue forthwith a new three penny edition of "The Voices of the Night." Suggestions of this nature, busily circulated in private, were, in good time, insinuated through the press, until at length the public expectation was as much on tiptoe as public expectation, in America, can ever

*POEMS. By William W. Lord. New York: D. Appleton & Co.

be expected to be about so small a matter as the issue of a volume of American poems. The climax of this whole effort, however, at forestalling the critical opinion, and by far the most injudicious portion of the procedure, was the publisher's announcement of the forthcoming book as "a very remarkable volume of poems."

The fact is, the only remarkable things about Mr. Lord's compositions, are their remarkable conceit, ignorance, impudence, platitude, stupidity and bombast:—we are sorry to say all this, but there is an old adage about the falling of the Heavens. Nor must we be misunderstood. We intend to wrong neither Mr. Lord nor our own conscience, by denying him particular merits—such as they are. His book is *not* altogether contemptible—although the conduct of his friends has innoculated nine-tenths of the community with the opinion that it is—but what we wish to say is, that "remarkable" is by no means the epithet to be applied, in the way of commendation, either to anything that he has yet done, or to anything that he may hereafter accomplish. In a word, while he has undoubtedly given proof of a very ordinary species of talent, no man whose opinion is entitled to the slightest respect, will admit in him any indication of genius.

The "particular merits" to which, in the case of Mr. Lord, we have allusion, are merely the accidental merits of particular passages. We say *accidental*—because poetical merit which is not simply an accident, is very sure to be found, more or less, in a state of *diffusion* throughout a poem. No man is entitled to the sacred name of poet, because from 160 pages of doggerel, may be culled a few sentences of worth. Nor would the case be in any respect altered, if these few sentences, or even if a few

passages of length, were of an excellence even supreme. For a poet is necessarily a man of genius, and with the spirit of true genius even its veriest common-places are intertwined and inextricably intertangled. When, therefore, amid a Sahara of platitude, we discover an occasional Oasis, we must not so far forget ourselves as to fancy any latent fertility in the sands. It is our purpose, however, to do the fullest justice to Mr. Lord, and we proceed at once to cull from his book whatever, in our opinion, will put in the fairest light his poetical pretensions.

And first we extract the *one* brief passage which aroused in us what we recognized as the Poetical Sentiment. It occurs, at page 94, in "Saint Mary's Gift," which, although excessively unoriginal at all points, is upon the whole, the least reprehensible poem of the volume. The heroine of the story having taken a sleeping draught, after the manner of Juliet, is conveyed to a vault, (still in the same manner) and (still in the same manner) awakes in the presence of her lover, who comes to gaze on what he supposes her corpse:

> And each unto the other was a dream;
> And so they gazed without a stir or breath,
> *Until her head into the golden stream*
> *Of her wide tresses, loosened from their wreath,*
> *Sank back, as she did yield again to death.*

At page 3, in a composition of much general *eloquence*, there occur a few lines of which we should not hesitate to speak enthusiastically were we not perfectly aware that Mr. Lord has no claim to their origination:

> ———Ye winds
> That in the impalpable deep caves of air,
> *Moving your silent plumes, in dreams of flight,*
> *Tumultuous lie*, and from your half-stretched wings
> Beat the faint zephyrs that disturb the air!

At page 6, in the same poem, we meet also, a passage of high merit, although sadly disfigured:

> Thee the bright host of Heaven,
> The stars adore:—a thousand altars, fed
> By pure unwearied hands, like cressets blaze
> In the blue depths of night; nor all unseen
> In the pale sky of day, with tempered light
> Burn *radiant of thy praise.*

The disfiguration to which we allude, lies in the making a blazing altar burn merely like a blazing cresset—a simile about as forcible as would be the likening an apple to a pear, or the seafoam to the froth on a pitcher of Burton's ale.

At page 7, still in the same poem, we find some verses which are very quotable, and will serve to make our readers understand what we mean by the eloquence of the piece:

> Great Worshipper! hast thou no thought of Him
> Who gave the Sun his brightness, winged the winds,
> And on the everlasting deep bestowed
> Its voiceless thunder—spread its fields of blue,
> And made them glorious *like an inner sky*
> *From which the islands rise like steadfast clouds,*
> How beautiful! who gemmed thy zone with stars,
> Around thee threw his own cerulean robe,—
> And bent his coronal about thy brows,
> Shaped of the seven splendors of the light—
> Piled up the mountains for thy throne; and thee
> The image of His beauty made and power,
> And gave thee to be sharer of His state,
> His majesty, His glory, and His fear!

We extract this *not* because we like it ourselves, but because we take it for granted that there are many who will, and that Mr. Lord himself would desire us to extract it as a specimen of his *power*. The "Great worshipper" is Nature. We disapprove, however, the man-milliner method in which she is tricked

out, item by item. The "How beautiful!" should be understood, we fancy, as an expression of admiration on the part of Mr. Lord, for the fine idea which immediately precedes—the idea which we have italicized. It is, in fact, by no means destitute of force—but we have met it before.

At page 70, there are two stanzas addressed to "My Sister." The first of these we cite as the best thing of equal length to be found in the book. Its conclusion is particularly noble.

> And shall we meet in heaven, and know and love?
> Do human feelings in that world above
> Unchanged survive? blest thought! but ah, I fear
> That thou, dear sister, in some other sphere,
> Distant from mine will (wilt) find a brighter home,
> Where I, unworthy found, may never come:—
> Or be so high above me glorified,
> *That I a meaner angel, undescried,*
> *Seeking thine eyes, such love alone shall see*
> *As angels give to all bestowed on me;*
> *And when my voice upon thy ear shall fall,*
> *Hear only such reply as angels give to all.*

We give the lines as they are: their grammatical construction is faulty; and the punctuation of the ninth line renders the sense equivocal.

Of that species of composition which comes most appropriately under the head, *Drivel*, we should have no trouble in selecting as many specimens as our readers could desire. We will afflict them with one or two:

SONG

> O soft is the ringdove's eye of love
> When her mate returns from a weary flight;
> And brightest of all the stars above
> Is the one bright star that leads the night.

But softer thine eye than the dove's by far,
When of friendship and pity thou speakest to me;
And brighter, O brighter, than eve's one star
When of love, sweet maid, I speak to thee.

Here is another

SONG

Oh, a heart it loves, it loves thee,
That never loved before
Oh, a heart it loves, it loves thee,
That heart can love no more.

As the rose was in the bud, love,
Ere it opened into sight,
As yon star in drumlie daylight
Behind the blue was bright—

So thine image in my heart, love,
As pure, as bright, as fair,
Thyself unseen, unheeded,
I saw and loved it there.

Oh, a heart it loves, it loves thee
As heart ne'er loved before;
Oh, a heart, it loves, loves, loves thee,
That heart can love no more.

In the "Widow s Complaint" we are entertained after this fashion:

And what are these children
I once thought my own,
What now do they seem
But his orphans alone?

In "The New Castalia" we have it thus:

Then a pallid beauteous maiden
Golden ghastly robes arrayed in
Such a wonderous strain displayed in,
In a wonderous song of Aidenne,
That all the gods and goddesses
Shook their golden yellow tresses,
Parnassus' self made half afraid in.

Just above this there is something about aged beldames dreaming

> ——of white throats sweetly jagged
> With a ragged butch-knife dull,
> And of night-mares neighing, weighing,
> On a sleeper's bosom *squatting*.

But in mercy to our readers we forbear.

Mr. Lord is never elevated above the dead level of his habitual platitude, by even the happiest thesis in the world. That any man could, at one and the same time, fancy himself a poet and string together as many pitiable inanities as we see here, on so truly suggestive a thesis as that of "A Lady taking the Veil," is to our apprehension a miracle of miracles. The idea would seem to be, of itself, sufficient to elicit fire from ice—to breathe animation into the most stolid of stone. Mr. Lord winds up a dissertation on the subject by the patronizing advice—

> Ere thou, irrevocable, to that dark creed
> Art yielded, *think*, *Oh Lady*, *think again*.

the whole of which would read better if it were

> Ere thou, irrevocable, to this d—d doggerel
> Art yielded, Lord, think! think!—ah think again.

Even with the great theme, Niagara, our poet fails in his obvious effort to work himself into a fit of inspiration. One of his poems has for title "A Hymn to Niagara"—but from beginning to end it is nothing more than a very silly "Hymn to Mr. Lord." Instead of describing the fall (as well as any Mr. Lord could be supposed to describe it) he rants about what *I* feel here, and about what *I* did not feel there —till at last the figure of little Mr. Lord, in the shape of a great capital I gets so thoroughly in between the

reader and the waterfall that not a particle of the latter is to be discovered. At one point the poet directs his soul to issue a proclamation as follows:

> Proclaim, my soul, proclaim it to the sky!
> And tell the stars, and tell the hills whose feet
> Are in the depth of earth, their peaks in heaven,
> And tell the Ocean's old familiar face
> Beheld by day and night, in calm and storm,
> That they nor aught beside in earth or heaven,
> Like thee, tremendous torrent, have so filled
> *Its* thought of beauty, and so awed with might!

The "*Its*" has reference to the soul of Mr. Lord, who thinks it necessary to issue a proclamation to the stars and the hills and the ocean's old familiar face—lest the stars and the hills and the ocean's old familiar face should chance to be unaware of the fact that it, (the soul of Mr. Lord,) admitted the waterfall to be a fine thing—but whether the cataract for the compliment, or the stars for the information, are to be considered the party chiefly obliged—that, for the life of us, we cannot tell.

From the "first impression" of the cataract, he says:

> At length my soul awaked—waked not again
> To be o'erpressed, o'ermastered, and engulphed,
> But of itself possessed, o'er all without
> Felt conscious mastery!
>
> And then
> Retired within, and self-withdrawn, I stood
> The two-fold centre and informing soul
> Of one vast harmony of sights and sounds,
> And from that deep abyss, that rock-built shrine,
> Though mute my own frail voice, I poured a hymn
> Of "praise and gratulation" like the noise
> Of banded angels when they shout to wake
> Empyreal echoes!

That so vast a personage as Mr. Lord should not be o'ermastered by the cataract, but feel "conscious mastery over all without"—and over all within, too —is certainly nothing more than reasonable and proper—but then he should have left the detail of these little facts to the cataract or to some other uninterested individual—even Cicero has been held to blame for a want of modesty—and although, to be sure, Cicero was not Mr. Lord, still Mr. Lord may be in danger of blame. He may have enemies (*very* little men!) who will pretend to deny that the "hymn of praise and gratulation" (if *this* is the hymn) bears at all points more than a partial resemblance to the "noise of banded angels when they shout to wake empyreal echoes." Not that *we* intend to deny it—but *they* will:—they are *very* little people and they *will*.

We have said that the "remarkable" feature, or at least one of the "remarkable" features of this volume is its platitude—its flatness. Whenever the reader meets anything not decidedly flat, he may take it for granted at once, that it is stolen. When the poet speaks, for example, at page 148, of

> Flowers, of young poets the first words—

who can fail to remember the line in the Merry Wives of Windsor.

> Fairies use flowers for their charactery?

At page 10 he says:

> Great oaks their heavenward lifted arms stretch forth
> In suppliance!

The same thought will be found in "Pelham," where the author is describing the dead tree beneath

which is committed the murder. The grossest plagiarisms, indeed, abound. We would have no trouble, even, in pointing out a score from our most unimportant self. At page 27, Mr. Lord says:

> They, albeit with inward pain
> Who thought to sing thy dirge, must sing thy Pæan!

In a poem called "Lenore," we have it

> Avaunt! to-night my heart is light—no dirge will I upraise,
> But waft the angel on her flight with a Pæan of old days.

At page 13, Mr. Lord says of certain flowers that

> Ere beheld on Earth they gardened Heaven!

We print it as printed—note of admiration and all. In a poem called "Al Aaraaf" we have it thus:

> ————A gemmy flower,
> Inmate of highest stars, where erst it shamed
> All other loveliness:—'twas dropped from Heaven
> And fell on gardens of the unforgiven
> In Trebizond.

At page 57, Mr. Lord says:

> On the old and haunted mountain,
> There in dreams I dared to climb,
> Where the clear Castalian fountain
> (Silver fountain) ever tinkling
> All the green around it sprinkling
> Makes perpetual rhyme—
> To my dream enchanted, golden,
> Came a vision of the olden
> Long-forgotten time.

There are no doubt many of our friends who will remember the commencement of our "Haunted Palace."

In the greenest of our valleys
By good angels tenanted,
Once a fair and stately palace
(Radiant palace) reared its head.
In the monarch Thought's dominion
It stood there.
Never seraph spread a pinion
Over fabric half so fair.
Banners yellow, glorious, golden,
On its roof did float and flow—
This—all this—was in the olden
Time, long ago.

At page 60, Mr. Lord says:

And the aged beldames napping,
Dreamed of gently rapping, rapping,
With a hammer gently tapping,
Tapping on an infant's skull.

In "The Raven," we have it:

While I pondered nearly napping,
Suddenly there came a rapping,
As of some one gently tapping,
Tapping at my chamber door.

But it is folly to pursue these thefts. As to any property of our own, Mr. Lord is very cordially welcome to whatever use he can make of it. But others may not be so pacifically disposed, and the book before us might be very materially thinned and reduced in cost, by discarding from it all that belongs to Miss Barrett, Tennyson, Keats, Shelley, Proctor, Longfellow and Lowell—the very class of poets, by the way, whom Mr. William W. Lord, in his "New Castalia" the most especially affects to satirize and to contemn.

It has been rumored, we say, or rather it has been *announced* that Mr. Lord is a graduate or perhaps a Professor of Princeton College—but we have had

much difficulty in believing anything of the kind. The pages before us are not only utterly devoid of that classicism of tone and manner—that better species of classicism which a liberal education never fails to impart—but they abound in the most outrageously vulgar violations of grammar—of prosody in its most extended sense.

Of versification, and all that appertains to it, Mr. Lord is ignorant in the extreme. We doubt if he can tell the difference between a dactyl and an anapæst. In the Heroic (Jambic) Pentameter he is continually introducing such verses as these:

A faint symphony to Heaven ascending—
No heart of love, O God, Infinite One—
Of a thought as weak as aspiration—
Who were the original priests of this—
Of grace, magnificence and power—
O'er whelm me; this darkness that shuts out the sky—

Alexandrines, in the same metre, are encountered at every step—but it is very clear from the points at which they are met, and at which the cæsura is placed, that Mr. Lord has no idea of employing them as Alexandrines:—They are merely excessive, that is to say, defective Pentameters. In a word, judging by his rhythm, we might suppose that the poet could neither see, hear, nor make use of his fingers. We do not know, in America, a versifier so utterly wretched and contemptible.

His most extraordinary sins, however, are in point of English. Here is his dedication, embodied in the very first page of the book:—

"To Professor Albert B. Dod, These Poems, the offspring of an Earnest (if ineffectual) Desire towards the True and Beautiful, which were hardly

my own by Paternity, when they became his by adoption, are inscribed, with all Reverence and Affection, by the Author."

What is anybody to make of all this? What is the meaning of a desire *toward?*—and is it the "True and Beautiful" or the "Poems" which were hardly Mr. Lord's own by paternity before they became his [Mr. Dod's] by adoption."

At page 12. we read:

> Think heedless one, or who with wanton step
> *Tramples* the flowers.

At page 75, within the compass of eleven lines, we have three of the grossest blunders:

> Oh Thou for whom as in thyself Thou art.
> And by thyself perceived, we know no name,
> *Nor* dare *not* seek to express—but unto us,
> Adonai! who before the heavens were built
> Or Earth's foundation laid, within thyself,
> Thine own most glorious habitation *dwelt,*
> But when within the abyss,
> With sudden light illuminated,
> Thou, thine image to behold,
> Into its quickened depths
> *Looked* down with brooding eye!

At page 79, we read:

> But ah! my heart, unduteous to my will,
> Breathes only sadness; like an instrument
> From whose quick strings, when hands devoid of skill
> Solicit joy, *they* murmur and lament.

At page 86, is something even grosser than this:

> And still and rapt as pictured Saint might be
> *Like saint-like* seemed as *her* she did adore.

At page 129, there is a similar error:

> With half-closed eyes and ruffled feathers known
> As *them* that fly not with the changing year.

At page 128, we find—

> And thou didst dwell therein so truly loved
> As none have been nor shall be loved again,
> And yet *perceived* not, &c.

At page 155, we have—

> But yet it may not cannot be
> That thou at length *hath* sunk to rest.

Invariably Mr. Lord writes didst did'st; couldst could'st, &c. The fact is he is absurdly ignorant of the commonest principles of grammar—and the only excuse we can make to our readers for annoying them with specifications in this respect is that, without the specifications we should never have been believed.

But enough of this folly. We are heartily tired of the book, and thoroughly disgusted with the impudence of the parties who have been aiding and abetting in thrusting it before the public. To the poet himself we have only to say—from any farther specimens of your stupidity, good Lord deliver us!

WILLIAM CULLEN BRYANT

MR. BRYANT'S position in the poetical world is, perhaps, better settled than that of any American. There is less difference of opinion about his rank; but, as usual, the agreement is more decided in private literary circles than in what appears to be the public expression of sentiment as gleaned from the press. I may as well observe here, too, that this coincidence of opinion in private circles is in all cases very noticeable when compared with the discrepancy of the apparent public opinion. In private it is quite a rare thing to find any strongly-marked disagreement—I mean, of course, about mere autorial merit. The author accustomed to seclusion, and mingling for the first time freely with the literary people about him, is invariably startled and delighted to find that the decisions of his own unbiased judgment—decisions to which he has refrained from giving voice on account of their broad contradiction to the decision of the press—are sustained and considered quite as matters of course by almost every person with whom he converses. The fact is, that when brought face to face with each other, we are constrained to a certain amount of honesty by the sheer trouble it causes us to mould the countenance to a lie. We put on paper with a grave air what we could not for our lives assert personally to a friend without either blushing or laughing outright. That the opinion of the press is not an honest opinion, that necessarily it is impossible that it should be an

honest opinion, is never denied by the members of the press themselves. Individual presses, of course, are now and then honest, but I speak of the combined effect. Indeed, it would be difficult for those conversant with the *modus operandi* of public journals to deny the general falsity of impression conveyed. Let in America a book be published by an unknown, careless or uninfluential author; if he publishes it "on his own account," he will be confounded at finding that no notice of it is taken at all. If it has been entrusted to a publisher of *caste*, there will appear forthwith in each of the leading *business* papers a variously-phrased *critique* to the extent of three or four lines, and to the effect that "we have received, from the fertile press of So and So, a volume entitled This and That, which appears to be well worthy persual, and which is 'got up' in the customary neat style of the enterprising firm of So and So." On the other hand, let our author have acquired influence, experience, or (what will stand him in good stead of either) effrontery, on the issue of his book he will obtain from his publisher a hundred copies (or more, as the case may be,) "for distribution among friends connected with the press." Armed with these, he will call personally either at the office or (if he understands his game) at the private residence of every editor within his reach, enter into conversation, compliment the journalist, interest him, as if incidentally, in the subject of the book, and finally, watching an opportunity, beg leave to hand him "a volume which, quite opportunely, is on the very matter now under discussion." If the editor seems sufficiently interested, the rest is left to fate; but if there is any lukewarmness, (usually indicated by a polite regret on the editor's part that he really has "no time to render the work that justice which

its importance demands,") then our author is prepared to understand and to sympathize; has, luckily, a friend thoroughly conversant with the topic, and who (perhaps) could be persuaded to write some account of the volume—provided that the editor would be kind enough just to glance over the *critique* and amend it in accordance with his own particular views. Glad to fill half a column or so of his editorial space, and still more glad to get rid of his visitor, the journalist assents. The author retires, consults the friend, instructs him touching the strong points of the volume, and insinuating in *some* shape a *quid pro quo*, gets an elaborate *critique* written, (or, what is more usual and far more simple, writes it himself,) and his business in this individual quarter is accomplished. Nothing more than sheer impudence is requisite to accomplish it in all.

Now the effect of this system (for it has really grown to be such) is obvious. In ninety-nine cases out of a hundred, men of genius, too indolent and careless about worldly concerns to bestir themselves after this fashion, have also that pride of intellect which would prevent them, under any circumstances, from even insinuating, by the presentation of a book to a member of the press, a desire to have that book reviewed. They, consequently, and their works, are utterly overwhelmed and extinguished in the flood of the *apparent* public adulation upon which in gilded barges are borne triumphant the ingenious toady and the diligent quack.

In general, the books of the toadies and quacks, not being read at all, are safe from any contradiction of this self-bestowed praise; but now and then it happens that the excess of the laudation works out in part its own remedy. Men of leisure, hearing one of the toady works commended, look at it, read its

preface and a few pages of its body, and throw it aside with disgust, wondering at the ill taste of the *editors* who extol it. But there is an iteration, and then a continuous reiteration of the panegyric, till these men of leisure begin to suspect themselves in the wrong, to fancy that there may really be something good lying *perdu* in the volume. In a fit of desperate curiosity they read it through critically, their indignation growing hotter at each succeeding page till it gets the better even of contempt. The result is, that reviews now appear in various quarters entirely at variance with the opinions so generally expressed, and which, but for these indignation reviews, would have passed universally current as the opinion of the public. It is in this manner that those gross *seeming* discrepancies arise which so often astonish us, but which vanish instantaneously in private society.

But although it may be said, in general, that Mr. Bryant's position is *comparatively* well settled, still for some time past there has been a growing tendency to under-estimate him. The new licentious "schools" of poetry—I do not now speak of the transcendentalists, who are the merest nobodies, fatiguing even themselves—but the Tennysonian and Barrettian schools, having, in their rashness of spirit, much in accordance with the whole spirit of the age, thrown into the shade necessarily all that seems akin to the conservatism of half a century ago. The conventionalities, even the most justifiable *decora* of composition, are regarded, *per se*, with a suspicious eye. When I say *per se*, I mean that, from finding them so long in connexion with conservatism of thought, we have come at last to dislike them, not merely as the outward visible signs of that conservatism, but as things evil in themselves. It is

very clear that those accuracies and elegancies of style, and of general manner, which in the time of Pope were considered as *prima facie* and indispensable indications of genius, are now conversely regarded. How few are willing to admit the possibility of reconciling genius with artistic skill! Yet this reconciliation is not only possible, but an absolute necessity. It is a mere prejudice which has hitherto prevented the union, by studiously insisting upon a natural repulsion which not only does not exist, but which is at war with all the analogies of nature. The greatest poems will not be written until this prejudice is annihilated; and I mean to express a very exalted opinion of Mr. Bryant when I say that his works in time to come will do much towards the annihilation.

I have never disbelieved in the perfect consistency, and even congeniality, of the highest genius and the profoundest art; but in the case of the author of "The Ages," I *have* fallen into the general error of undervaluing his poetic ability on account of the mere "elegancies and accuracies" to which allusion has already been made. I confess that, with an absolute abstraction from all personal feelings, and with the most sincere intention to do justice, I was at one period beguiled into this popular error; there can be no difficulty, therefore, on my part, in excusing the inadvertence in others.

It will never do to claim for Bryant a genius of the loftiest order, but there has been latterly, since the days of Mr. Longfellow and Mr. Lowell, a growing disposition to deny him *genius* in *any* respect. He is now commonly spoken of as "a man of high poetical *talent*, very '*correct*,' with a warm appreciation of the beauty of nature and great descriptive powers, but rather too much of the old-school manner of

Cowper, Goldsmith and Young." This is the truth, but not the whole truth. Mr. Bryant has genius, and that of a marked character, but it has been overlooked by modern schools, because deficient in those externals which have become in a measure symbolical of those schools.

Dr. Griswold, in summing up his comments on Bryant, has the following significant objections: "His genius is not versatile; he has related no history; he has not sung of the passion of love; he has not described artificial life. Still the tenderness and feeling in 'The Death of the Flowers,' 'Rizpah,' 'The Indian Girl's Lament,' and other pieces, show that he might have excelled in delineations of the gentler passions had he made them his study."

Now, in describing *no* artificial life, in relating *no* history, in *not* singing the passion of love, the poet has merely shown himself the profound artist, has merely evinced a proper consciousness that such are not the legitimate themes of poetry. That they are not, I have repeatedly shown, or attempted to show, and to go over the demonstration now would be foreign to the gossiping and desultory nature of the present article. What Dr. Griswold means by "the gentler passions" is, I presume, not very clear to himself, but it is possible that he employs the phrase in consequence of the gentle, unpassionate emotion induced by the poems of which he quotes the titles. It is precisely this "unpassionate emotion" which is the limit of the true poetical art. Passion proper and poesy are discordant. Poetry, in elevating, tranquilizes *the soul*. With *the heart* it has nothing to do. For a fuller explanation of these views I refer the reader to an analysis of a poem by Mrs. Welby—an analysis contained in an article called

"Marginalia," and published about a year ago in "The Democratic Review."

The editor of "The Poets and Poetry of America" thinks the literary precocity of Bryant remarkable. "There are few recorded *more* remarkable," he says. The first edition of "The Embargo" was in 1808, and the poet was born in 1794; he was more than thirteen, then, when the satire was printed—although it is reported to have been written a year earlier. I quote a few lines.

> Oh, might some patriot rise, the gloom dispel,
> Chase Error's mist and break the magic spell!
> But vain the wish; for, hark! the murmuring meed
> Of hoarse applause from yonder shed proceed.
> Enter and view the thronging concourse there,
> Intent with gaping mouth and stupid stare;
> While in the midst their supple leader stands,
> Harangues aloud and flourishes his hands,
> To adulation tunes his servile throat,
> And sues successful for each blockhead's vote.

This is a fair specimen of the whole, both as regards its satirical and rhythmical power. A satire is, of course, no *poem*. I have known boys of an earlier age do better things, although the case is rare. All depends upon the course of education. Bryant's father "was familiar with the best English literature, and perceiving in his son indications of superior genius, attended carefully to his instruction, taught him the art of composition, and guided his literary taste." This being understood, the marvel of such verse as I have quoted ceases at once, even admitting it to be thoroughly the boy's own work; but it is difficult to make any such admission. The father *must* have suggested, revised, retouched.

The longest poem of Bryant is "The Ages"—thirty-five Spenserian stanzas. It is the one im-

proper theme of its author. The design is, "from a survey of the past ages of the world, and of the successive advances of mankind in knowledge and virtue, to justify and confirm the hopes of the philanthropist for the future destinies of the human race." All this would have been more rationally, because more effectually, accomplished in prose. Dismissing it as a poem, (which in its general tendency it is not,) one might commend the force of its argumentation but for the radical error of deducing a hope of *progression* from the *cycles* of physical nature.

The sixth stanza is a specimen of noble versification (within the narrow limits of the Iambic Pentameter).

> Look on this beautiful world and read the truth
> In her fair page; see, every season brings
> New change in her of everlasting youth;
> Still the green soil with joyous living things
> Swarms; the wide air is full of joyous wings;
> And myriads still are happy in the sleep
> Of Ocean's azure gulfs and where he flings
> The restless surge. Eternal Love doth keep
> In his complacent arms, the earth, the air, the deep.

The cadences here at *page*, *swarms* and *surge*, cannot be surpassed. There are comparatively few consonants. Liquids and the softer vowels abound, and the partial line after the pause at "surge," with the stately march of the succeeding Alexandrine, is one of the finest conceivable *finales*.

The poem, in general, has unity, completeness. Its tone of calm, elevated and hopeful contemplation, is well sustained throughout. There is an occasional quaint grace of expression, as in

> Nurse of full streams and lifter up of proud
> Sky-mingling mountains that o'erlook the cloud

or of antithetical and rhythmical force combined, as in

> The shock that hurled
> To dust, in many fragments dashed and strown
> The throne whose roots were in another world
> And whose far-stretching shadow awed our own.

But we look in vain for anything more worthy commendation.

"Thanatopsis" is the poem by which its author is best known, but is by no means his best poem. It owes the *extent* of its celebrity to its nearly absolute freedom from *defect*, in the ordinary understanding of the term. I mean to say that its negative merit recommends it to the public attention. It is a thoughtful, well phrased, well constructed, well versified poem. The concluding thought is exceedingly noble, and has done wonders for the success of the whole composition.

"The Waterfowl" is very beautiful, but like "Thanatopsis," owes a great deal to its completeness and pointed termination.

"Oh, Fairest of the Rural Maids!" will strike every poet as the truest *poem* written by Bryant. It is richly ideal.

"June" is sweet and perfectly well modulated in its rhythm, and inexpressibly pathetic. It serves well to illustrate my previous remarks about passion in its connexion with poetry. In "June" there is, very properly, nothing of the intense *passion* of grief, but the subdued sorrow which comes up, as if perforce, to the surface of the poet's gay sayings about his grave, we find thrilling us to the soul, while there is yet a spiritual *elevation* in the thrill.

And what if cheerful shouts at noon
Come, from the village sent,
Or songs of maids beneath the moon
With fairy laughter blent?
And what if, in the evening light,
Betrothed lovers walk in sight
Of my low monument?
I would the lovely scene around
Might know no sadder sight nor sound.
I know—I know I should not see
The season's glorious show,
Nor would its brightness shine for me
Nor its wild music flow;
But if around my place of sleep
The friends I love should come to weep,
They might not haste to go:—
Soft airs, and song, and light, and blóom,
Should keep them lingering by my tomb.

The thoughts here belong to the highest class of poetry, the imaginative-natural, and are of themselves sufficient to stamp their author a man of genius.

I copy at random a few passages of similar cast, inducing a similar conviction.

The great heavens
Seem to stoop down upon the scene in love,
A nearer vault and of a tenderer blue
Than that which bends above the eastern hills.....

Till twilight blushed, and lovers walked and wooed
In a foregotten language and *old tunes*
From instruments of unremembered form
Gave the soft winds a voice.....

Breezes of the south,
That toss the golden and the flame-like flowers,
And pass the prairie hawk, that, poised on high,
Flaps his broad wings, yet moves not.....

On the breast of earth
I lie, and listen to her mighty voice—
A voice of many tones sent up from streams
That wander through the gloom, from woods unseen;
Swayed by the sweeping of the tides of air;
From rocky chasms where darkness dwells all day
And hollows of the great invisible hills,
And sands that edge the ocean, stretching far
Into the night—a melancholy sound!....

All the green herbs
Are stirring in his breath; *a thousand flowers*
By the road side and the borders of the brook,
Nod gayly to each other.

[There is a fine "echo of sound to sense" in "the borders of the brook," etc.; and in the same poem from which these lines are taken, ("The Summer Wind,") may be found two other equally happy examples, *e. g.*

For me, I lie
Languidly in the shade, where the thick turf,
Yet virgin from the kisses of the sun,
Retains some freshness.

And again—

All is silent, save the faint
And interrupted murmur of the bee
Settling on the sick flowers, and then again
Instantly on the wing.

I resume the imaginative extracts.]

Paths, homes, graves, ruins from the lowest glen
To where life shrinks from the fierce Alpine air.....
And the blue gentian flower that in the breeze
Nods lonely, of her beauteous race the last.....
A shoot of that old vine that made
The nations silent in the shade.....
But 'neath yon crimson tree,
Lover to listening maid might breathe his flame,
Nor mark, within its roseate canopy,
Her flush of maiden shame.....

The mountains that infold,
In their wild sweep, the colored landscape round,
Seem *groups of giant kings in purple and gold*
That guard the enchanted ground.

[This latter passage is especially beautiful. Happily to endow inanimate nature with sentience and a capability of action, is one of the severest tests of the poet.]

....There is a power whose care
Teaches thy way along *that pathless coast,*
The desert and illimitable air.
Lone, wandering, but not lost.....

Pleasant shall be thy way, *where weekly bows*
The shutting flowers and darkling waters pass,
And 'twixt the o'ershadowing branches and the grass....

Sweet odors in the sea air, sweet and strange,
Shall tell the home-sick mariner of the shore,
And, listening to thy murmur, he shall deem
He hears the rustling leaf and running stream.....

In a "Sonnet, To——," are some richly imaginative lines. I quote the whole.

Ay, thou art for the grave; thy glances shine
Too brightly to shine long: another spring
Shall deck her for men's eyes, but not for thine,
Sealed in a sleep which knows no waking.
The fields for thee have no medicinal leaf,
And the vexed are no mineral of power;
And they who love thee wait in anxious grief
Till the slow plague shall bring the fatal hour.
Glide softly to thy rest, then: death should come
Gently to one of gentle mould like thee,
As light winds wandering through groves of bloom,
Detach the delicate blossom from the tree,
Close thy sweet eyes calmly and without pain,
And we will trust in God to see thee yet again.

The happiest *finale* to these brief extracts will be the magnificent conclusion of "Thanatopsis."

> So live, that, when thy summons comes to join
> *The innumerable caravan that moves*
> *To that mysterious realm where each shall take*
> *His chamber in the silent halls of death,*
> Thou go not, like the quarry slave at night,
> Scourged to his dungeon, but sustained and soothed
> By an unfaltering trust, approach thy grave—
> *Like one that draws the drapery of his couch*
> *About him and lies down to pleasant dreams.*

In the minor morals of the muse Mr. Bryant excels. In versification (*as far as he goes*) he is unsurpassed in America—unless, indeed, by Mr. Sprague. Mr. Longfellow is not so thorough a versifier within Mr. Bryant's limits, but a far better one upon the whole, on account of his greater range. Mr. B., however, is by no means always accurate—or defensible, for accurate is not the term. His lines are occasionally unpronounceable through excess of harsh consonants, as in

> As if they loved to breast the breeze that sweeps the cool
> clear sky.

Now and then he gets out of his depth in attempting anapæstic rhythm, of which he makes sad havoc, as in

> And Rispah, once the loveliest of all
> That bloomed and smiled in the court of Saul.

Not unfrequently, too, even his pentameters are inexcusably rough, as in

> Kind influence. Lo! their orbs burn more bright.

which can only be read metrically by drawing out "influence" into three marked syllables, shortening

the long monosyllable "Lo!" and lengthening the short one "their."

Mr. Bryant is not devoid of mannerisms, one of the most noticeable of which is his use of the epithet "old" preceded by some other adjective, *e. g.*—

> In all that proud old world beyond the deep;
> There is a tale about these gray old rocks;
> The wide old woods resounded with her song;
> And from the gray old trunks that high in heaven,

etc. etc. etc. These duplicates occur so frequently as to excite a smile upon each repetition.

Of merely grammatical errors the poet is rarely guilty. Faulty constructions are more frequently chargeable to him. In "The Massacre of Scio" we read—

> Till the last link of slavery's chain
> Is shivered to be worn no more.

What shall be worn no more? The chain, of course —but the link is implied. It will be understood that I pick these flaws only with difficulty from the poems of Bryant. He is, in the "minor morals," the most generally correct of our poets.

He is now fifty-two years of age. In height, he is, perhaps, five feet nine. His frame is rather robust. His features are large but thin. His countenance is sallow, nearly bloodless. His eyes are piercing gray, deep set, with large projecting eyebrows. His mouth is wide and massive, the expression of the smile hard, cold—even sardonic. The forehead is broad, with prominent organs of ideality; a good deal bald; the hair thin and grayish, as are also the whiskers, which he wears in a simple style. His bearing is quite distinguished, full of the aristocracy of intellect. In general, he looks in better

health than before his last visit to England. He seems active—physically and morally energetic. His dress is plain to the extreme of simplicity, although of late there is a certain degree of Anglicism about it.

In character no man stands more loftily than Bryant. The peculiarly melancholy expression of his countenance has caused him to be accused of harshness, or coldness of heart. Never was there a greater mistake. His soul is charity itself, in all respects generous and noble. His manners are undoubtedly reserved.

Of late days he has nearly, if not altogether abandoned literary pursuits, although still editing, with unabated vigor, "The New York Evening Post." He is married, (Mrs. Bryant still living,) has two daughters, (one of them Mrs. Parke Godwin,) and is residing for the present at Vice-Chancellor McCown's, near the junction of Warren and Church streets.

NATHANIEL HAWTHORNE*

THE reputation of the author of "Twice-Told Tales" has been confined, until very lately, to literary society; and I have not been wrong, perhaps, in citing him as *the* example, *par excellence*, in this country, of the privately-admired and publicly-unappreciated man of genius. Within the last year or two, it is true, an occasional critic has been urged, by honest indignation, into very warm approval. Mr. Webber, for instance, (than whom no one has a keener relish for that kind of writing which Mr. Hawthorne has best illustrated,) gave us, in a late number of "The American Review," a cordial and certainly a full tribute to his talents; and since the issue of the "Mosses from an Old Manse," criticisms of similar tone have been by no means infrequent in our more authoritative journals. I can call to mind few reviews of Hawthorne published *before* the "Mosses." One I remember in "Arcturus" (edited by Matthews and Duyckinck) for May, 1841; another in the "American Monthly" (edited by Hoffman and Herbert) for March, 1838; a third in the ninety-sixth number of the "North American Review." These criticisms, however, seemed to have little effect on the popular taste—at least, if we are to form any idea of the popular taste by reference to its expression in the newspapers, or by the sale of the author's book. It

*Twice-Told Tales. By Nathaniel Hawthorne. James Munroe & Co., Boston. 1842.
Mosses from an Old Manse. By Nathaniel Hawthorne Wiley & Putnam, New York. 1846.

was never the fashion (until lately) to speak of him in any summary of our best authors.

The daily critics would say, on such occasions, "Is there not Irving and Cooper, and Bryant, and Paulding, and—Smith?" or, "Have we not Halleck and Dana, and Longfellow, and—Thompson?" or, "Can we not point triumphantly to our own Sprague, Willis, Channing, Bancroft, Prescott and—Jenkins?" but these unanswerable queries were never wound up by the name of Hawthorne.

Beyond doubt, this inappreciation of him on the part of the public arose chiefly from the two causes to which I have referred—from the facts that he is neither a man of wealth nor a quack; but these are insufficient to account for the whole effect. No small portion of it is attributable to the very marked idiosyncrasy of Mr. Hawthorne himself. In one sense, and in great measure, to be peculiar is to be original, and than the true originality there is no higher literary virtue. This true or commendable originality, however, implies not the uniform, but the continuous peculiarity—a peculiarity springing from ever-active vigor of fancy—better still if from ever-present force of imagination, giving its own hue, its own character to everything it touches, and, especially, *self impelled to touch everything.*

It is often said, inconsiderately, that very original writers always fail in popularity—that such and such persons are too original to be comprehended by the mass. "Too peculiar," should be the phrase, "too idiosyncratic." It is, in fact, the excitable, undisciplined and child-like popular mind which most keenly feels the original.

The criticism of the conservatives, of the hackneys, of the cultivated old clergymen of the "North American Review," is precisely the criticism which

condemns and alone condemns it. "It becometh not a divine," saith Lord Coke, "to be of a fiery and salamandrine spirit." Their conscience allowing them to move nothing themselves, these dignitaries have a holy horror of being moved. "Give us *quietude*," they say. Opening their mouths with proper caution, they sigh forth the word "*Repose*." And this is, indeed, the one thing they should be permitted to enjoy, if only upon the Christian principle of give and take.

The fact is, that if Mr. Hawthorne were really original, he could not fail of making himself felt by the public. But the fact is, he is *not* original in any sense. Those who speak of him as original, mean nothing more than that he differs in his manner or tone, and in his choice of subjects, from any author of their acquaintance—their acquaintance not extending to the German Tieck, whose manner, in *some* of his works, is absolutely identical with that *habitual* to Hawthorne. But it is clear that the element of the literary originality is novelty. The element of its appreciation by the reader is the reader's sense of the new. Whatever gives him a new and insomuch a pleasurable emotion, he considers original, and whoever frequently gives him such emotion, he considers an original writer. In a word, it is by the sum total of these emotions that he decides upon the writer's claim to originality. I may observe here, however, that there is clearly a point at which even novelty itself would cease to produce the legitimate originality, if we judge this originality, as we should, by the effect designed: this point is that at which *novelty becomes nothing novel;* and here the artist, *to preserve his originality*, will subside into the commonplace. No one, I think, has noticed that, merely through inattention to this matter,

Moore has comparatively failed in his "Lalla Rookh." Few readers, and indeed few critics, have commended this poem for originality—and, in fact, the effect, originality, is not produced by it—yet no work of equal size so abounds in the happiest originalities, individually considered. They are so excessive as, in the end, to deaden in the reader all capacity for their appreciation.

These points properly understood, it will be seen that the critic (unacquainted with Tieck) who reads a single tale or essay by Hawthorne, may be justified in thinking him original; but the tone, or manner, or choice of subject, which induces in this critic the sense of the new, will—if not in a second tale, at least in a third and all subsequent ones—not only fail of inducing it, but bring about an exactly antagonistic impression. In concluding a volume, and more especially in concluding all the volumes of the author, the critic will abandon his first design of calling him "original," and content himself with styling him "peculiar."

With the vague opinion that to be original is to be unpopular, I could, indeed, agree, were I to adopt an understanding of originality which, to my surprise, I have known adopted by many who have a right to be called critical. They have limited, in a love for mere words, the literary to the metaphysical originality. They regard as original in letters, only such combinations of thought, of incident, and so forth, as are, in fact, absolutely novel. It is clear, however, not only that it is the novelty of *effect* alone which is worth consideration, but that this effect is *best* wrought, for the end of all fictitious composition, pleasure, by shunning rather than by seeking the absolute novelty of combination. Originality, thus understood, tasks and startles the in-

tellect, and so brings into undue action the faculties to which, in the lighter literature, we least appeal. And thus understood, it cannot fail to prove unpopular with the masses, who, seeking in this literature amusement, are positively offended by instruction. But the true originality—true in respect of its purposes—is that which, in bringing out the half-formed, the reluctant, or the unexpressed fancies of mankind, or in exciting the more delicate pulses of the heart's passion, or in giving birth to some universal sentiment or instinct in embryo, thus combines with the pleasurable effect of *apparent* novelty, a real egotistic delight. The reader, in the case first supposed, (that of the absolute novelty,) is excited, but embarrassed, disturbed, in some degree even pained at his own want of perception, at his own folly in not having himself hit upon the idea. In the second case, his pleasure is doubled. He is filled with an intrinsic and an extrinsic delight. He feels and intensely enjoys the seeming novelty of the thought, enjoys it as really novel, as absolutely original with the writer—*and* himself. They two, he fancies, have, alone of all men, thought thus. They two have, together, created this thing. Henceforward there is a bond of sympathy between them—a sympathy which irradiates every subsequent page of the book.

There is a species of writing which, with some difficulty, may be admitted as a lower degree of what I have called the true original. In its perusal we say to ourselves, not "how original this is!" nor "here is an idea which I and the author have alone entertained," but "here is a charmingly obvious fancy," or sometimes even, "here is a thought which I am not sure has ever occurred to myself, but which, of course, has occurred to all the

rest of the world." This kind of composition (which still appertains to a high order) is usually designated as "the natural." It has little external resemblance, but strong internal affinity to the true original, if, indeed, as I have suggested, it is not of this latter an inferior degree. It is best exemplified, among English writers, in Addison, Irving and *Hawthorne*. The "ease" which is so often spoken of as its distinguishing feature, it has been the fashion to regard as ease in appearance alone, as a point of really difficult attainment. This idea, however, must be received with some reservation. The natural style is difficult only to those who should never intermeddle with it—to the unnatural. It is but the result of writing with the understanding, or with the instinct that the *tone*, in composition, should be that which, at any given point or upon any given topic, would be the tone of the great mass of humanity. The author who, after the manner of the North Americans, is merely at *all* times *quiet*, is, of course, upon *most* occasions, merely silly or stupid, and has no more right to be thought "easy" or "natural" than has a cockney exquisite, or the sleeping beauty in the wax-works.

The "peculiarity," or sameness, or monotone of Hawthorne, would, in its mere character of "peculiarity," and without reference to what *is* the peculiarity, suffice to deprive him of all chance of popular appreciation. But at his failure to be appreciated, we can, *of course*, no longer wonder, when we find him monotonous at decidedly the worst of all possible points—at that point which, having the least concern with Nature, is the farthest removed from the popular intellect, from the popular sentiments, and from the popular taste. I allude to the strain of allegory which completely overwhelms the greater

number of his subjects, and which in some measure interferes with the direct conduct of absolutely all.

In defence of allegory, (however, or for whatever object employed,) there is scarcely one respectable word to be said. Its best appeals are made to the fancy—that is to say, to our sense of adaptation, not of matters proper, but of matters improper for the purpose, of the real with the unreal; having never more of intelligible connexion than has something with nothing, never half so much of effective affinity as has the substance for the shadow. The deepest emotion aroused within us by the happiest allegory, *as* allegory, is a very, very imperfectly satisfied sense of the writer's ingenuity in overcoming a difficulty we should have preferred his not having attempted to overcome. The fallacy of the idea that allegory, in any of its moods, can be made to enforce a truth —that metaphor, for example, may illustrate as well as embellish an argument—could be promptly demonstrated; the converse of the supposed fact might be shown, indeed, with very little trouble—but these are topics foreign to my present purpose. One thing is clear, that if allegory ever establishes a fact, it is by dint of overturning a fiction. Where the suggested meaning runs through the obvious one in a *very* profound undercurrent, so as never to interfere with the upper one without our own volition, so as never to show itself unless *called* to the surface, there only, for the proper uses of fictitious narrative, is it available at all. Under the best circumstances, it must always interfere with that unity of effect which, to the artist, is worth all the allegory in the world. Its vital injury, however, is rendered to the most vitally important point in fiction—that of earnestness or verisimilitude. That "The Pilgrim's Progress" is a ludicrously over-rated book, owing its

seeming popularity to one or two of those accidents in critical literature which by the critical are sufficiently well understood, is a matter upon which no two thinking people disagree; but the pleasure derivable from it, in any sense, will be found in the direct ratio of the reader's capacity to smother its true purpose, in the direct ratio of his ability to keep the allegory out of sight, or of his *in*ability to comprehend it. Of allegory properly handled, judiciously subdued, seen only as a shadow or by suggestive glimpses, and making its nearest approach to truth in a not obtrusive and therefore not unpleasant *appositeness*, the "Undine" of De La Motte Fouqué is the best, and undoubtedly a very remarkable specimen.

The obvious causes, however, which have prevented Mr. Hawthorne's *popularity*, do not suffice to condemn him in the eyes of the few who belong properly to books, and to whom books, perhaps, do not quite so properly belong. These few estimate an author, not as do the public, altogether by what he does, but in great measure—indeed, even in the greatest measure—by what he evinces a capability of doing. In this view, Hawthorne stands among literary people in America much in the same light as did Coleridge in England. The few, also, through a certain warping of the taste, which long pondering upon books as books merely never fails to induce, are not in condition to view the errors of a scholar as errors altogether. At any time these gentlemen are prone to think the public not right rather than an educated author wrong. But the simple truth is, that the writer who aims at impressing the people, is *always* wrong when he fails in forcing that people to receive the impression. How far Mr. Hawthorne has addressed the people at all, is, of course, not a question for me to decide. His books afford strong

internal evidence of having been written to himself and his particular friends alone.

There has long existed in literature a fatal and unfounded prejudice, which it will be the office of this age to overthrow—the idea that the mere bulk of a work must enter largely into our estimate of its merit. I do not suppose even the weakest of the Quarterly reviewers weak enough to maintain that in a book's size or mass, abstractly considered, there is anything which especially calls for our admiration. A mountain, simply through the sensation of physical magnitude which it conveys, does indeed, affect us with a sense of the sublime, but we cannot admit any such influence in the contemplation even of "The Columbiad." The Quarterlies themselves will not admit it. And yet, what else are we to understand by their continual prating about "sustained effort?" Granted that this sustained effort has accomplished an epic—let us then admire the effort, (if this be a thing admirable,) but certainly not the epic on the effort's account. Common sense, in the time to come, may possibly insist upon measuring a work of art rather by the object it fulfils, by the impression it makes, than by the time it took to fulfil the object, or by the extent of "sustained effort" which became necessary to produce the impression. The fact is, that perseverance is one thing and genius quite another; nor can all the transcendentalists in Heathendom confound them.

The pieces in the volumes entitled "Twice-Told Tales," are now in their third republication, and, of course, are thrice-told. Moreover, they are by no means *all* tales, either in the ordinary or in the legitimate understanding of the term. Many of them are pure essays; for example, "Sights from a

Steeple," "Sunday at Home," "Little Annie's Ramble," "A Rill from the Town Pump," "The Toll-Gatherer's Day," "The Haunted Mind," "The Sister Years," "Snow-Flakes," "Night Sketches," and "Foot-Prints on the Sea-Shore." I mention these matters chiefly on account of their discrepancy with that marked precision and finish by which the body of the work is distinguished.

Of the Essays just named, I must be content to speak in brief. They are each and all beautiful, without being characterized by the polish and adaptation so visible in the tales proper. A painter would at once note their leading or predominant feature, and style it *repose*. There is no attempt at effect. All is quiet, thoughtful, subdued. Yet this repose may exist simultaneously with high originality of thought; and Mr. Hawthorne has demonstrated the fact. At every turn we meet with novel combinations; yet these combinations never surpass the limits of the quiet. We are soothed as we read; and with all is a calm astonishment that ideas so apparently obvious have never occurred or been presented to us before. Herein our author differs materially from Lamb or Hunt or Hazlitt—who, with vivid originality of manner and expression, have less of the true novelty of thought than is generally supposed, and whose originality, at best, has an uneasy and meretricious quaintness, replete with startling effects unfounded in nature, and inducing trains of reflection which lead to no satisfactory result. The Essays of Hawthorne have much of the character of Irving, with more of originality, and less of finish; while, compared with the Spectator, they have a vast superiority at all points. The Spectator, Mr. Irving, and Hawthorne have in common that

tranquil and subdued manner which I have chosen to denominate *repose*; but, in the case of the two former, this repose is attained rather by the absence of novel combination, or of originality, than otherwise, and consists chiefly in the calm, quiet, unostentatious expression of commonplace thoughts, in an unambitious, unadulterated Saxon. In them, by strong effort, we are made to conceive the absence of all. In the essays before me the absence of effort is too obvious to be mistaken, and a strong undercurrent of *suggestion* runs continuously beneath the upper stream of the tranquil thesis. In short, these effusions of Mr. Hawthorne are the product of a truly imaginative intellect, restrained, and in some measure repressed, by fastidiousness of taste, by constitutional melancholy, and by indolence.

But it is of his tales that I desire principally to speak. The tale proper, in my opinion, affords unquestionably the fairest field for the exercise of the loftiest talent, which can be afforded by the wide domains of mere prose. Were I bidden to say how the highest genius could be most advantageously employed for the best display of its own powers, I should answer, without hesitation—in the composition of a rhymed poem, not to exceed in length what might be perused in an hour. Within this limit alone can the highest order of true poetry exist. I need only here say, upon this topic, that, in almost all classes of composition, the unity of effect or impression is a point of the greatest importance. It is clear, moreover, that this unity cannot be thoroughly preserved in productions whose perusal cannot be completed at one sitting. We may continue the reading of a prose composition, from the very nature of prose itself, much longer than we can persevere, to any good purpose, in the

perusal of a poem. This latter, if truly fulfilling the demands of the poetic sentiment, induces an exaltation of the soul which cannot be long sustained. All high excitements are necessarily transient. Thus a long poem is a paradox. And, without unity of impression, the deepest effects cannot be brought about. Epics were the offspring of an imperfect sense of Art, and their reign is no more. A poem *too* brief may produce a vivid, but never an intense or enduring impression. Without a certain continuity of effort—without a certain duration of repetition or purpose—the soul is never deeply moved. There must be the dropping of the water upon the rock. De Béranger has wrought brilliant things—pungent and spirit-stirring—but, like all immassive bodies, they lack *momentum*, and thus fail to satisfy the poetic Sentiment. They sparkle and excite, but, from want of continuity, fail deeply to impress. Extreme brevity will degenerate into epigrammatism; but the sin of extreme length is more unpardonable. *In medio tutissimus ibis.*

Were I called upon, however, to designate that class of composition which, next to such a poem as I have suggested, should best fulfil the demands of high genius—should offer it the most advantageous field of exertion—I should unhesitatingly speak of the prose tale as Mr. Hawthorne has here exemplified it. I allude to the short prose narrative, requiring from a half-hour to one or two hours in its perusal. The ordinary novel is objectionable, from its length, for reasons already stated in substance. As it cannot be read at one sitting, it deprives itself, of course, of the immense force derivable from *totality*. Worldly interests intervening during the pauses of perusal, modify, annul, or counteract, in a greater or less degree, the impressions of the book. But

simple cessation in reading would, of itself, be sufficient to destroy the true unity. In the brief tale, however, the author is enabled to carry out the fulness of his intention, be it what it may. During the hour of perusal the soul of the reader is at the writer's control. There are no external or extrinsic influences—resulting from weariness or interruption.

A skilful literary artist has constructed a tale. If wise, he has not fashioned his thoughts to accommodate his incidents; but having conceived, with deliberate care, a certain unique or single *effect* to be wrought out, he then invents such incidents—he then combines such events as may best aid him in establishing this preconceived effect. If his very initial sentence tend not to the outbringing of this effect, then he has failed in his first step. In the whole composition there should be no word written, of which the tendency, direct or indirect, is not to the one pre-established design. And by such means, with such care and skill, a picture is at length painted which leaves in the mind of him who contemplates it with a kindred art, a sense of the fullest satisfaction. The idea of the tale has been presented unblemished, because undisturbed; and this is an end unattainable by the novel. Undue brevity is just as exceptionable here as in the poem; but undue length is yet more to be avoided.

We have said that the tale has a point of superiority even over the poem. In fact, while the *rhythm* of this latter is an essential aid in the development of the poem's highest idea—the idea of the Beautiful—the artificialities of this rhythm are an inseparable bar to the development of all points of thought or expression which have their basis in *Truth*. But Truth is often, and in very great degree,

the aim of the tale. Some of the finest tales are tales of ratiocination. Thus the field of this species of composition, if not in so elevated a region on the mountain of Mind, is a table-land of far vaster extent than the domain of the mere poem. Its products are never so rich, but infinitely more numerous, and more appreciable by the mass of mankind. The writer of the prose tale, in short, may bring to his theme a vast variety of modes or inflections of thought and expression—(the ratiocinative, for example, the sarcastic or the humorous) which are not only antagonistical to the nature of the poem, but absolutely forbidden by one of its most peculiar and indispensable adjuncts; we allude, of course, to rhythm. It may be added, here, *par parenthèse*, that the author who aims at the purely beautiful in a prose tale is laboring at a great disadvantage. For Beauty can be better treated in the poem. Not so with terror, or passion, or horror, or a multitude of such other points. And here it will be seen how full of prejudice are the usual animadversions against those *tales of effect*, many fine examples of which were found in the earlier numbers of Blackwood. The impressions produced were wrought in a legitimate sphere of action, and constituted a legitimate although sometimes an exaggerated interest. They were relished by every man of genius: although there were found many men of genius who condemned them without just ground. The true critic will but demand that the design intended be accomplished, to the fullest extent, by means most advantageously applicable.

We have very few American tales of real merit—we may say, indeed, none, with the exception of "The Tales of a Traveller" of Washington Irving, and these "Twice-Told Tales" of Mr. Hawthorne.

Some of the pieces of Mr. John Neal abound in vigor and originality; but in general, his compositions of this class are excessively diffuse, extravagant, and indicative of an imperfect sentiment of Art. Articles at random are, now and then, met with in our periodicals which might be advantageously compared with the best effusions of the British Magazines; but, upon the whole, we are far behind our progenitors in this department of literature.

Of Mr. Hawthorne's Tales we would say, emphatically, that they belong to the highest region of Art —an Art subservient to genius of a very lofty order. We had supposed, with good reason for so supposing, that he had been thrust into his present position by one of the impudent *cliques* which beset our literature, and whose pretensions it is our full purpose to expose at the earliest opportunity; but we have been most agreeably mistaken. We know of few compositions which the critic can more honestly commend than these "Twice-Told Tales." As Americans, we feel proud of the book.

Mr. Hawthorne's distinctive trait is invention, creation, imagination, originality—a trait which, in the literature of fiction, is positively worth all the rest. But the nature of the originality, so far as regards its manifestation in letters, is but imperfectly understood. The inventive or original mind as frequently displays itself in novelty of *tone* as in novelty of matter. Mr. Hawthorne is original in *all* points.

It would be a matter of some difficulty to designate the best of these tales; we repeat that, without exception, they are beautiful. "Wakefield" is remarkable for the skill with which an old idea—a well-known incident—is worked up or discussed. A man of whims conceives the purpose of quitting

his wife and residing *incognito*, for twenty years in her immediate neighborhood. Something of this kind actually happened in London. The force of Mr. Hawthorne's tale lies in the analysis of the motives which must or might have impelled the husband to such folly, in the first instance, with the possible causes of his perseverance. Upon this thesis a sketch of singular power has been constructed. "The Wedding Knell" is full of the boldest imagination—an imagination fully controlled by taste. The most captious critic could find no flaw in this production. "The Minister's Black Veil" is a masterly composition of which the sole defect is that to the rabble its exquisite skill will be *caviare*. The *obvious* meaning of this article will be found to smother its insinuated one. The *moral* put into the mouth of the dying minister will be supposed to convey the *true* import of the narrative; and that a crime of dark dye, (having reference to the "young lady") has been committed, is a point which only minds congenial with that of the author will perceive. "Mr. Higginbotham's Catastrophe" is vividly original and managed most dexterously. "Dr. Heidegger's Experiment" is exceedingly well imagined, and excuted with surpassing ability. The artist breathes in every line of it. "The White Old Maid" is objectionable, even more than the "Minister's Black Veil," on the score of its mysticism. Even with the thoughtful and analytic, there will be much trouble in penetrating its entire import.

"The Hollow of the Three Hills" we would quote in full, had we space;—not as evincing higher talent than any of the other pieces, but as affording an excellent example of the author's peculiar ability. The subject is commonplace. A witch subjects the

Distant and the Past to the view of a mourner. It has been the fashion to describe, in such cases, a mirror in which the images of the absent appear; or a cloud of smoke is made to arise, and thence the figures are gradually unfolded. Mr. Hawthorne has wonderfully heightened his effect by making the ear, in place of the eye, the medium by which the fantasy is conveyed. The head of the mourner is enveloped in the cloak of the witch, and within its magic folds there arise sounds which have an all-sufficient intelligence. Throughout this article also, the artist is conspicuous—not more in positive than in negative merits. Not only is all done that should be done, but (what perhaps is an end with more difficulty attained) there is nothing done which should not be. Every word *tells*, and there is not a word which does *not* tell.

In "Howe's Masquerade" we observe something which resembles a plagiarism—but which *may* be a very flattering coincidence of thought. We quote the passage in question.

With a dark flush of wrath upon his brow they saw the general *draw his sword* and *advance to meet* the figure *in the cloak* before the latter had stepped one pace upon the floor. "*Villain, unmuffle yourself*," cried he, "you pass no farther!" The figure, without blenching a hair's breadth from the sword which was pointed at his breast, made a solemn pause, and *lowered the cape of the cloak* from his face, yet not sufficiently for the spectators to catch a glimpse of it. But Sir William Howe had evidently seen enough. The sternness of his countenance gave place to a look of wild amazement, if not horror, while he recoiled several steps from the figure, *and let fall his sword upon the floor*.—See vol. 2, p. 20.

The idea here is, that the figure in the cloak is the phantom or reduplication of Sir William Howe; but in an article called "William Wilson," one of

the "Tales of the Grotesque and Arabesque," we have not only the same idea, but the same idea similarly presented in several respects. We quote two paragraphs, which our readers may compare with what has been already given. We have italicized, above, the immediate particulars of resemblance.

The brief moment in which I averted my eyes had been sufficient to produce, apparently, a material change in the arrangement at the upper or farther end of the room. A large mirror, it appeared to me, now stood where none had been perceptible before; and as I stepped up to it in extremity of terror, mine own image, but with features all pale and dabbled in blood, *advanced* with a feeble and tottering gait to meet me. Thus it appeared I say, but was not. It was Wilson, who then stood before me in the agonies of dissolution. Not a line in all the marked and singular lineaments of that face which was not even identically mine own. *His mask and cloak lay where he had thrown them, upon the floor.* Vol. 2, p. 336.

Here, it will be observed that, not only are the two general conceptions identical, but there are various *points* of similarity. In each case the figure seen is the wraith or duplication of the beholder. In each case the scene is a masquerade. In each case the figure is cloaked. In each, there is a quarrel —that is to say, angry words pass between the parties. In each the beholder is enraged. In each the cloak and sword fall upon the floor. The "villain, unmuffle yourself," of Mr. H. is precisely paralleled by a passage at page 56, of "William Wilson."

I must hasten to conclude this paper with a summary of Mr. Hawthorne's merits and demerits.

He is peculiar and *not* original—unless in those detailed fancies and detached thoughts which his

want of general originality will deprive of the appreciation due to them, in preventing them from ever reaching the *public* eye. He is infinitely too fond of allegory, and can never hope for popularity so long as he persists in it. This he will not do, for allegory is at war with the whole tone of his nature, which disports itself never so well as when escaping from the mysticism of his Goodman Browns and White Old Maids into the hearty, genial, but still Indian-summer sunshine of his Wakefields and Little Annie's Rambles. Indeed, *his* spirit of "metaphor run-mad" is clearly imbibed from the phalanx and phalanstery atmosphere in which he has been so long struggling for breath. He has not half the material for the exclusiveness of authorship that he possesses for its universality. He has the purest style, the finest taste, the most available scholarship, the most delicate humor, the most touching pathos, the most radiant imagination, the most consummate ingenuity; and with these varied good qualities he has done *well* as a mystic. But is there any one of these qualities which should prevent his doing doubly as well in a career of honest, upright, sensible, prehensible and comprehensible things? Let him mend his pen, get a bottle of visible ink, come out from the Old Manse, cut Mr. Alcott, hang (if possible) the editor of "The Dial," and throw out of the window to the pigs all his odd numbers of "The North American Review."

ELIZABETH FRIEZE ELLETT

MRS. ELLETT, or ELLET, has been long before the public as an author. Having contributed largely to the newspapers and other periodicals in her youth, she first made her *dêbût* on a more comprehensive scale, as the writer of "Teresa Contarini," a five-act tragedy, which had considerable merit, but was withdrawn after its first night of representation at the Park. This occurred at some period previous to the year 1834; the precise date I am unable to remember. The ill success of the play had little effect in repressing the ardor of the poetess, who has since furnished numerous papers to the Magazines. Her articles are, for the most part, in the *rifacimento* way, and, although no doubt composed in good faith, have the disadvantage of *looking* as if hashed up for just so much money as they will bring. The charge of wholesale plagiarism which has been adduced against Mrs. Ellett, I confess that I have not felt sufficient interest in her works, to investigate—and am therefore bound to believe it unfounded. In person, short and much inclined to *embonpoint*.

AMELIA WELBY

MRS. AMELIA WELBY has nearly all the imagination of Maria del Occidente, with a more refined taste; and nearly all the passion of Mrs. Norton, with a nicer ear, and (what is surprising) equal art. Very few American poets are at all comparable with her in the true poetic qualities. As for our *poetesses* (an absurd but necessary word), few of them approach her.

With some modifications, this little poem would do honor to any one living or dead:

The moon within our casement beams,
Our blue-eyed babe hath dropped to sleep,
And I have left it to its dreams
Amid the shadows deep,
To muse beside the silver tide
Whose waves are rippling at thy side.

It is a still and lovely spot
Where they have laid thee down to rest;
The white rose and forget-me-not
Bloom sweetly on thy breast,
And birds and streams with liquid lull
Have made the stillness beautiful.

And softly thro' the forest bars
Light lovely shapes, on glossy plumes,
Float ever in, like winged stars,
Amid the purpling glooms:
Their sweet songs, borne from tree to tree,
Thrill the light leaves with melody.

Alas! the very path I trace,
In happier hours thy footsteps made;
This spot was once thy resting-place;
Within the silent shade
Thy white hand trained the fragrant bough
That drops its blossoms o'er me now.

'Twas here at eve we used to rove;
'Twas here I breathed my whispered vows,
And sealed them on thy lips, my love,
Beneath the apple-boughs.
Our hearts had melted into one,
But Death undid what Love had done.

Alas! too deep a weight of thought
Had fill'd thy heart in youth's sweet hour;
It seem'd with love and bliss o'erfraught;
As fleeting passion-flower
Unfolding 'neath a southern sky,
To blossom soon and soon to die.

Yet in these calm and blooming bowers,
I seem to see thee still,
Thy breath seems floating o'er the flowers,
Thy whisper on the hill;
The clear faint star-light and the sea
Are whispering to my heart of thee.

No more thy smiles my heart rejoice—
Yet still I start to meet thine eye,
And call upon the low sweet voice
That gives me no reply—
And list within my silent door
For the light feet that come no more.

In a critical mood I would speak of these stanzas thus:—The subject has *nothing* of originality:—A widower muses by the grave of his wife. Here then is a great demerit; for originality of theme, if not absolutely first sought, should be sought among the first. Nothing is more clear than this proposition—although denied by the chlorine critics (the

grass-green). The desire of the new is an element of the soul. The most exquisite pleasures grow dull in repetition. A strain of music enchants. Heard a second time it pleases. Heard a tenth, it does not displease. We hear it a twentieth, and ask ourselves why we admired. At the fiftieth it induces ennui—at the hundredth, disgust.

Mrs. Welby's theme is, therefore, radically faulty so far as originality is concerned;—but of common themes, it is one of the very best among the class *passionate*. True passion is prosaic—homely. Any strong mental emotion stimulates *all* the mental faculties; thus grief the imagination:—but in proportion as the effect is strengthened, the cause surceases. The excited fancy triumphs—the grief is subdued—chastened—is no longer grief. In this mood we are poetic, and it is clear that a poem now written will be poetic in the exact ratio of its dispassion. A passionate poem is a contradiction in terms. When I say, then, that Mrs. Welby's stanzas are good among the class *passionate* (using the term commonly and falsely applied), I mean that her tone is properly subdued, and is not so much the tone of passion, as of a gentle and melancholy regret, interwoven with a pleasant sense of the natural loveliness surrounding the lost in the tomb, and a memory of her human beauty while alive.—Elegiac poems should either assume this character, or dwell purely on the beauty (moral or physical) of the departed—or, better still, utter the notes of triumph. I have endeavored to carry out this latter idea in some verses which I have called "Lenore."

Those who object to the proposition—that poetry and passion are discordant—would cite Mrs. Welby's poem as an instance of a passionate one. It is precisely similar to the hundred others which have

been cited for like purpose. But it is *not* passionate; and for this reason (with others having regard to her fine genius) it *is* poetical. The critics upon this topic display an amusing *ignoratio elenchi*.

Dismissing originality and tone, I pass to the general handling, than which nothing could be more pure, more natural, or more judicious. The perfect keeping of the various points is admirable—and the result is entire unity of impression, or effect. The time, a moonlight night; the locality of the grave; the passing thither from the cottage, and the conclusion of the theme with the return to "the silent door"; the babe left, meanwhile, "to its dreams"; the "white rose and forget-me-not" upon the breast of the entombed; the "birds and streams, with liquid lull, that make the stillness beautiful"; the birds whose songs "thrill the light leaves with melody";—all these are appropriate and lovely conceptions:—only quite unoriginal;—and (be it observed), the higher order of genius should, and will combine the original with that which is *natural* —not in the vulgar sense, (ordinary)—but in the artistic sense, which has reference to the *general intention of Nature*.—We have this combination well effected in the lines:

> And softly through the forest bars
> Light lovely shapes, on glossy plumes,
> Float ever in, like winged stars,
> Amid the purpling glooms—

which are, unquestionably, the finest in the poem.

The reflections suggested by the scene—commencing:

> Alas! the very path I trace,

are, also, something more than merely natural, and

are richly ideal; especially the cause assigned for the early death; and "the fragrant bough"

That drops its blossoms o'er me now.

The two concluding stanzas are remarkable examples of common fancies rejuvenated, and ætherealized by grace of expression, and melody of rhythm.

The "light lovely shapes" in the third stanza (however beautiful in themselves), are defective, when viewed in reference to the "birds" of the stanza preceding. The topic "birds" is dismissed in the one paragraph, to be resumed in the other.

"Drops," in the last line of the fourth stanza, is improperly used in an active sense. *To drop* is a neuter verb. An apple drops; we let the apple fall.

The repetition ("seemed," "seem," "seems,") in the sixth and seventh stanzas, is ungraceful; so also that of "heart," in the last line of the seventh, and the first of the eighth. The words "breathed" and "whispered," in the second line of the fifth stanza, have a force too nearly identical. "*Neath*," just below, is an awkward contraction. *All* contractions are awkward. It is no paradox, that the more prosaic the construction of verse, the better. *Inversions* should be dismissed. The most forcible lines are the most direct. Mrs. Welby owes three-fourths of her power (so far as style is concerned), to her freedom from these vulgar, and particularly English errors—elision and inversion. *O'er* is, however, too often used by her in place of *over*, and *'twas* for *it was*. We see instances here. The only inversions, strictly speaking, are

The moon within our casement beams.

and—"Amid the shadows deep."

The versification throughout, is unusually good. Nothing can excel

> And birds and streams with liquid lull
> Have made the stillness beautiful....
>
> And sealed them on thy lips, my love,
> Beneath the apple-boughs....

or the whole of the concluding stanza, if we leave out of view the unpleasant repetition of "*And*," at the commencement of the third and fifth lines, "*Thy white hand trained*" (see stanza the fourth) involves four consonants, that unite with difficulty —*ndtr*—and the harshness is rendered more apparent, by the employment of the spondee, "*hand trained*," in place of an iambus. "*Melody*," is a feeble termination of the third stanza's last line. The syllable *dy* is not full enough to sustain the rhyme. All these endings, liber*ty*, proper*ty*, happi*ly*, and the like, however justified by authority, are grossly objectionable. Upon the whole, there are some poets in America (Bryant and Sprague, for example), who equal Mrs. Welby in the negative merits of that limited versification which they chiefly affect —the iambic pentameter—but none equal her in the richer and positive merits of rhythmical variety, conception—invention. They, in the old routine, rarely err. She often surprises, and always delights, by novel, rich and accurate combination of the ancient musical expressions.

BAYARD TAYLOR

I BLUSH to see, in the *Literary World*, an invidious notice of BAYARD TAYLOR'S "*Rhymes of Travel.*" What makes the matter *worse*, the *critique* is from the pen of one who, although undeservedly, holds, himself, some position as a poet:—and what makes the matter *worst*, the attack is anonymous, and (while ostensibly commending) most zealously endeavors to damn the young writer "with faint praise." In his whole life, the author of the criticism never published a poem, long or short, which could compare, either in the higher merits, or in the minor morals of the Muse, with *the worst* of Mr. Taylor's compositions.

Observe the generalizing, disingenuous, patronizing tone:

> It is the empty charlatan, to whom all things are alike impossible, who attempts everything. He can do one thing as well as another; for he can really do nothing..... Mr. Taylor's volume, as we have intimated, is an advance upon his previous publication. We could have wished, indeed, something more of restraint in the rhetoric, *but, &c., &c., &c.*

The concluding sentence, here, is an excellent example of one of the most ingeniously malignant of critical *ruses*—that of condemning an author, in especial, for what the world, in general *feel* to be his principal merit. In fact, the "rhetoric" of Mr. Taylor, in the sense intended by the critic, is Mr. Taylor's *distinguishing excellence*. He is, unquestionably, the most terse, glowing, and vigorous of

all our poets, young or old—in point, I mean, of *expression.* His sonorous, well-balanced rhythm puts me often in mind of Campbell (in spite of our anonymous friend's *implied* sneer at "mere jingling of rhymes, brilliant and successful for the moment,") and his rhetoric in general is of the highest order:—By "rhetoric" I intend the *mode generally* in which Thought is presented. Where shall we find more magnificent passages than these?

> First queenly Asia, from the fallen thrones
> Of twice three thousand years,
> Came *with the wo a grieving Goddess owns*
> *Who longs for mortal tears,*
> The dust of ruin to her mantle clung
> And dimmed her crown of gold,
> While *the majestic sorrows of her tongue*
> *From Tyre to Indus rolled.*
>
> Mourn with me, sisters, in my realm of wo
> *Whose only glory streams*
> *From its lost childhood like the Arctic glow*
> *Which sunless winter dreams.*
> *In the red desert moulders Babylon*
> *And the wild serpent's hiss*
> *Echoes in Petra's palaces of stone*
> *And waste Persepolis.*
>
> Then from her seat, *amid the palms embowered*
> *That shade the Lion-land,*
> Swart Africa in dusky aspect towered,
> The fetters on her hand.
> Backward she saw, from out the drear eclipse,
> The mighty Theban years,
> *And the deep anguish of her mournful lips*
> *Interpreted her tears.*

I copy these passages first, because the critic in question has copied them, without the slightest appreciation of their grandeur—for they *are* grand;

and secondly, to put the question of "rhetoric" at rest. No artist who reads them will deny that they are the perfection of *skill* in their way. But thirdly, I wish to call attention to the glowing *imagination* evinced in the lines italicized. My very soul revolts at *such* efforts (as the one I refer to,) to depreciate *such* poems as Mr. Taylor's. *Is* there *no* honor—no chivalry left in the land? Are our most deserving writers to be *forever* sneered down, or hooted down, or damned down with faint praise, by a set of men who possess little other ability than that which assures temporary success to *them*, in common with Swaim's Panacea or Morrison's pills? The fact is, some person should write, at once, a Magazine paper exposing—*ruthlessly* exposing, the *dessous de cartes* of our literary affairs. He should show how and why it is that the ubiquitous quack in letters can always "succeed," while *genius*, (which implies self-respect, with a scorn of creeping and crawling,) must inevitably succumb. He should point out the "easy arts" by which any one, base enough to do it, can get himself placed at the very head of American Letters by an article in that magnanimous journal, "The——Review." He should explain, too, how readily the same work can be induced (as in the case of Simms,) to vilify, and vilify *personally* any one not a Northerner, for a trifling "consideration." In fact, our criticism needs a thorough regeneration, *and must have it.*

HENRY B. HIRST

MR. HENRY B. HIRST, of Philadelphia, has, undoubtedly, some merit as a poet. His sense of beauty is keen, although indiscriminative; and his versification would be unusually effective but for the spirit of hyperism, or exaggeration, which seems to be the ruling feature of the man. He is always sure to overdo a good thing; and, in especial, he insists upon rhythmical effects until they cease to have any effect at all—or until they give to his compositions an air of mere oddity. His principal *defect*, however, is a want of constructive ability;—he can never put together a story intelligibly. His chief *sin* is imitativeness. He never writes anything which does not immediately put us in mind of something that we have seen better written before. Not to do him injustice, however, I here quote two stanzas from a little poem of his, called "The Owl." The passages italicized are highly imaginative:

When twilight fades and evening falls
  Alike on tree and tower,
And Silence, like a pensive maid,
  Walks round each slumbering bower:
When fragrant flowerets fold their leaves,
  And all is still in sleep,
The horned owl *on moonlit wing*
  Flies from the donjon keep.

And he calls aloud—"too-whit! too-whoo!"
  And the nightingale is still,
And the pattering step of the hurrying hare
  Is hushed upon the hill;

And he crouches low in the dewy grass
As the *lord of the night* goes by,
Not with a loudy whirring wing
But like a lady's sigh.

No one, save a poet at heart, could have conceived these images; and they are embodied with much skill. In the "pattering step," &c., we have an admirable "echo of sound to sense," and the title, "lord of the night," applied to the owl, does Mr. Hirst infinite credit—*if* the idea be original with Mr. Hirst. Upon the whole, the poems of this author are eloquent (or perhaps elocutionary) rather than poetic—but he *has* poetical merit, beyond a doubt—merit which his enemies need not attempt to smother by any mere ridicule thrown upon the *man*.

To my face, and in the presence of my friends, Mr. H. has always made a point of praising my own poetical efforts; and, for this reason, I should forgive him, perhaps, the amiable weakness of abusing them anonymously. In a late number of "The Philadelphia Saturday Courier," he does me the honor of attributing to my pen a ballad called "Ulalume," which has been going the rounds of the press, sometimes with *my* name to it; sometimes with Mr. Willis's, and sometimes with no name at all. Mr. Hirst insists upon it that *I* wrote it, and it is just possible that he knows more about the matter than I do myself. Speaking of a particular passage, he says:

We have spoken of the mystical appearance of Astarte as a fine touch of Art. This is borrowed, and from the first canto of Hirst's Endymion—[The reader will observe that the anonymous critic has *no* personal acquaintance whatever with Mr. Hirst, but takes care to call him "Hirst" simply, just as we say "Homer."]—from Hirst's "Endy-

mion," published years since in "The Southern Literary Messenger":

> Slowly Endymion bent, the light Elysian
> Flooding his figure. Kneeling on one knee,
> He loosed his sandals, lea
> And lake and woodland glittering on his vision-
> A fairy landscape, bright and beautiful,
> With Venus at her full.

Astarte is another name for Venus; and when we remember that Diana is about to descend to Endymion—that the scene which is about to follow is one of love—that Venus is the star of love—and that Hirst, by introducing it as he does, shadows out his story exactly as Mr. Poe introduces his Astarte—the plagiarism of idea becomes evident.

Now I really feel ashamed to say that, as yet, I have not perused "Endymion"—for Mr. Hirst will retort at once—"That is no fault of mine—you *should* have read it—I gave you a copy—and, besides, you had no business to fall asleep when I did you the honor of reading it *to* you." Without a word of excuse, therefore, I will merely copy the passage in "Ulalume" which the author of "Endymion" says I purloined from the lines quoted above:

> And now, as the night was senescent
> And star-dials pointed to morn—
> As the star-dials hinted of morn—
> At the end of my path a liquescent
> And nebulous lustre was born,
> Out of which a miraculous crescent
> Arose with a duplicate horn—
> Astarte's bediamonded crescent,
> Distinct with its duplicate horn.

Now, I may be permitted to regret—really to *regret*—that I can find no resemblance between the two passages in question; for *malo cum Platone*

errare, &c., and to be a good imitator of Henry B. Hirst, is quite honor enough for *me*.

In the meantime, here is a passage from another little ballad of mine, called "Lenore," first published in 1830:

How shall the ritual, then, be read—the requiem how be sung
By you—by yours, the evil eye—by yours, the slanderous tongue
That did to death the innocence that died, and died so young?

And here is a passage from "*The Penance of Roland*," by Henry B. Hirst, published in "Graham's Magazine" for January, 1848:

Mine the tongue that wrought this evil—mine the false and slanderous tongue
That done to death the Lady Gwineth—Oh, my soul is sadly wrung!
"Demon! devil," groaned the warrior, "devil of *the evil eye!*".

Now my objection to all this is not that Mr. Hirst has *appropriated* my property—(I am fond of a *nice* phrase)—but that he has not done it so cleverly as I could wish. Many a lecture, on literary topics, have I given Mr. H.; and I confess that, in general, he has adopted my advice so implicitly that his poems, upon the whole, are little more than our conversations done into verse.

"Steal, dear Endymion," I used to say to him—"for very well do I know you can't help it; and the more you put in your book that is not your own, why the better your book will be:—but be cautious and steal *with an air*. In regard to myself—you need give yourself no trouble about *me*. I shall always feel honored in being of use to you; and provided you purloin my poetry *in a reputable*

manner, you are quite welcome to just as much of it as you (who are a *very* weak little man) can conveniently carry away."

So far—let me confess—Mr. Hirst has behaved remarkably well in largely availing himself of the privilege thus accorded:—but, in the case now at issue, he stands in need of some gentle rebuke. I do *not* object to his stealing my verses; but I *do* object to his stealing them in bad grammar. My quarrel with him is *not*, in short, that he *did* this thing, but that he *has went and done did it*.

ROBERT WALSH

HAVING read Mr. Walsh's "Didactics," with much attention and pleasure, I am prepared to admit that he is one of the finest writers, one of the most accomplished scholars, and when not in too great a hurry, one of the most accurate thinkers in the country. Yet had I never seen this work I should never have entertained these opinions. Mr. Walsh has been peculiarly an anonymous writer, and has thus been instrumental in cheating himself of a great portion of that literary renown which is most unequivocally his due. I have been not unfrequently astonished in the perusal of this book, at meeting with a variety of well known and highly esteemed acquaintances, for whose paternity I had been accustomed to give credit where I now find it should not have been given. Among these I may mention in especial the very excellent Essay on the acting of Kean, entitled "*Notices of Kean's principal performances during his first season in Philadelphia,*" to be found at page 146, volume I. I have often thought of the unknown author of this Essay, as of one to whom I might speak, if occasion should at any time be granted me, with a perfect certainty of being understood. I have looked to the article itself as to a fair oasis in the general blankness and futility of our customary theatrical notices. I read it with that thrill of pleasure with which I always welcome my own long-cherished opinions, when I meet them unexpectedly in the language of another. How absolute is the necessity now daily growing, of rescuing our stage criticism from the control of illiterate

mountebanks, and placing it in the hands of gentlemen and scholars!

The paper on *Collegiate Education*, is much more than a sufficient reply to that Essay in the *Old Bachelor* of Mr. Wirt, in which the attempt is made to argue down colleges as seminaries for the young. Mr. Walsh's article does not uphold Mr. Barlow's plan of a National University—a plan which is assailed by the Attorney General—but comments upon some errors in point of fact, and enters into a brief but comprehensive examination of the general subject. He maintains with undeniable truth, that it is illogical to deduce arguments against universities which are to exist at the present day, from the inconveniences found to be connected with institutions formed in the dark ages—institutions similar to our own in but few respects, modelled upon the principles and prejudices of the times, organized with a view to particular ecclesiastical purposes, and confined in their operations by an infinity of Gothic and perplexing regulations. He thinks, (and I believe he thinks with a great majority of our well educated fellow citizens,) that in the case either of a great national institute or of State universities, nearly all the difficulties so much insisted upon will prove a series of mere chimeras—that the evils apprehended might be readily obviated, and the acknowledged benefits uninterruptedly secured. He denies, very justly, the assertion of the *Old Bachelor*—that, in the progress of society, funds for collegiate establishments will no doubt be accumulated, independently of government, when their benefits are evident, and a necessity for them felt—and that the rich who have funds will, whenever strongly impressed with the necessity of so doing, provide, either by associations or other-

wise, proper seminaries for the education of their children. He shows that these assertions are contradictory to experience, and more particularly to the experience of the State of Virginia, where, notwithstanding the extent of private opulence, and the disadvantages under which the community so long labored from a want of regular and systematic instruction, it was the government which was finally compelled, and not private societies which were induced, to provide establishments for effecting the great end. He says, (and therein we must all fully agree with him,) that Virginia may consider herself fortunate in following the example of all the enlightened nations of modern times rather than in hearkening to the counsels of the Old Bachelor. He dissents, (and who would not?) from the allegation, that "the most eminent men in Europe, particularly in England, have received their education neither at public schools or universities," and shows that the very reverse may be affirmed—that on the continent of Europe by far the greater number of its great names have been attached to the rolls of its universities—and that in England a vast majority of those minds which we have reverenced so long—the Bacons, the Newtons, the Barrows, the Clarkes, the Spencers, the Miltons, the Drydens, the Addisons, the Temples, the Hales, the Clarendons, the Mansfields, Chatham, Pit, Fox, Wyndham, &c., were educated among the venerable cloisters of Oxford or of Cambridge. He cites the Oxford Prize Essays, so well known even in America, as direct evidence of the energetic ardor in acquiring knowledge brought about through the means of British Universities, and maintains that "when attention is given to the subsequent public stations and labors of most of the writers of these Essays,

it will be found that they prove also the ultimate practical utility of the literary discipline of the colleges for the students and the nation." He argues, that were it even true that the greatest men have not been educated in public schools, the fact would have little to do with the question of their efficacy in the instruction of the mass of mankind. Great men cannot be *created*—and are usually independent of all particular schemes of education. Public seminaries are best adapted to the generality of cases. He concludes with observing that the course of study pursued at English Universities, is more liberal by far than we are willing to suppose it—that it is, demonstrably, the best, inasmuch as regards the preference given to classical and mathematical knowledge—and that upon the whole it would be an easy matter, in transferring to America the general principles of those institutions, to leave them their obvious errors, while we avail ourselves as we best may, of their still more obvious virtues and advantages.

The only paper in the *Didactics*, to which I have any decided objection, is a tolerably long article on the subject of *Phrenology*, entitled "Memorial of the Phrenological Society of —— to the Honorable the Congress of —— sitting at ——." Considered as a specimen of mere burlesque, the *Memorial* is well enough—but I am sorry to see the energies of a scholar and an editor (who should be, if he be not, a man of metaphysical science,) so wickedly employed as in any attempt to throw ridicule upon a question, (however much maligned, or however apparently ridiculous,) whose merits he has never examined, and of whose very nature, history, and assumptions, he is most evidently ignorant. Mr. Walsh is either ashamed of this article now, or he will have plentiful reason to be ashamed of it hereafter.

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